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The Effects of Perceived Motivations and Mental Distress on the Likelihood of Reporting and Engaging in Self-Protective Measures Among Victims of Stalking

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The Effects of Perceived Motivations and Mental Distress on the Likelihood of Reporting and

Engaging in Self-Protective Measures Among Victims of Stalking

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ABSTRACT

The current study examines how perceived motivations and mental distress affect decision-making among victims of stalking. Although stalking victimization has become relatively common in recent years, with approximately 1 in 6 women reporting to have been victims of stalking at some point in their lives, victims of stalking are unlikely to report to police compared to victims of other violent crimes (NISVS, 2015). Though studies have explored the dynamics of stalking, little is known about the role of the victim's perception of the offender's motivation in the victim's decision to report to the police and engage in self-protective measures. The present study draws from several bodies of literature to thoroughly examine the relationship between the victim's perception of the offender's motivation, level of mental distress, and the likelihood of reporting and utilizing self-protective measures. To do so, the current study uses the 2006 National Crime Victimization Survey: Stalking Victimization Supplement (n=1,686). Results from the implemented analyses indicate that the victim's perception of the offender's motivation significantly affects both the odds of reporting to police and the expected number of self-protective measures reported by the victim. While the results indicate that the level of mental distress reported by the victim significantly increases the odds of reporting to police, the analyses show mixed support for the effects of mental distress on the expected number of self-protective measures reported by the victim. Overall, the current thesis' findings indicate that when examining decision-making among victims of stalking, the victim's perception of the offender's motivation and mental distress should be taken into consideration.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

In the early 20th century, psychiatrists referred to stalking as "erotomania," the delusion of being loved by someone that often-led individuals, predominately women, to follow the target of their obsession (Best, 2018). These forms of obsession were viewed as "relationship problems"; it was not until the early 1990s that the first laws prohibiting stalking were enacted. Over the last few decades there has been a growing awareness of stalking victimization among law enforcement officials, victims' rights advocates, scholars, and the general public. Although variation in defining stalking exists, most legal and scholarly definitions include three criteria: (1) the presence of repeated unwanted behaviors, (2) the presence of fear, and (3) the presence of emotional distress (Nobles & Fox, 2017, p.52; The National Center for Victims of Crime, 2013).

Using this definition, studies establishing the prevalence of stalking have found that between 22% and 45% of college students have reported experiencing at least one behavioral indicator of stalking victimization, including cyberstalking (Bjorklund, Hakkanen-Nyholm, Sheridan, & Roberts, 2010; McNamara & Marsil, 2012; NCVS, 2009; Reyns, Henson, & Fisher, 2010). Furthermore, the risk of stalking varies by gender, with women reporting higher rates of victimization than men. According to the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS), 16% of women compared to 5% of men reported being victims of stalking at some point in their lives (Office of Justice Programs, 2018). Similarly, Sheridan, Gillet, and Davies (2002) found that 5% of their all male sample met the criteria for stalking victimization; despite the low estimates, such findings suggest that male stalking victimization should not be ignored by researchers.

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In addition to the studies on the prevalence of stalking, researchers have utilized both qualitative and quantitative measures to develop typologies of stalking. Among the most widely explored typologies are the domestic violence stalker and the delusional stalker, with research continuously finding that intimate partner violence is among the most significant predictors of stalking victimization (Katz & Rich, 2015; Nobles, Fox, Piquero, & Piquero, 2009; Roberts & Dziegielewski, 2009). In addition, such typologies are characterized by specific motivations such as jealousy, resent, and need for control, which differentiate the type of stalking-like behaviors the offender will engage in. Subsequently, such stalking-like behaviors will affect the level of mental distress experienced by the victim.

These typologies of stalking can affect the types of mental, physical, and occupational consequences victims of both traditional stalking and cyberstalking may experience. Physical consequences, such as weight changes, loss of appetite, sleep disturbances, headaches, and physical abuse, although rare, have been reported by victims (Sheridan & Lyndon, 2010). On the other hand, studies assessing the emotional and mental health consequences of victims have found both high rates of diagnosable psychiatric disorders and the use of psychotropic medications, especially among female victims (Kuehner, Gass, & Dressing, 2012). Lastly, victims of stalking have reported the need to change or end their employment as a result of their victimization (Pathe & Mullen, 1997).

Despite the physical and emotional harm that has been associated with stalking victimization, the literature has continuously found that victims are unlikely to report their victimization to police (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2012). Campbell and Moore (2011) found that although 35% of their sample identified as victims of stalking, only 12% reported their victimization to law enforcement (Campbell & Moore, 2011). Overall, factors that have been

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found to increase the likelihood of reporting include the severity of behavior, and the level of fear perceived by the victim (Campbell & Moore, 2011; Reyns & Englebrecht, 2010).

The convergence of mental and physical consequences resulting from stalking victimization, not only influences the likelihood of reporting to police, but also the likelihood victims will engage in self-protective measures. Self-protective measures include precautionary and prevention efforts by individuals to reduce their victimization. Efforts to identify the factors that persuade victims of stalking to engage in self-protective measures have been minimal. Researchers have, however, explored the types of self-protective measures victims of stalking have engaged in to cope with their victimization. Among such strategies include changes in routine activities, changes in appearance, installing security systems, confronting the stalker, and/or ignoring the behavior (Amar, 2016; Fremouw, Westrup, & Pennypacker, 1997; Mustaine & Tewksbury, 1999; Nobles, Reyns, Fox & Fisher, 2014; Tewksbury & Mustaine, 2003).

Although studies have explored victim's likelihood of reporting and taking self-protective measures and separate studies have developed typologies for perpetrator motivation, these bodies of literature have not been thoroughly integrated. In other words, the literature has yet to examine how the victim's perception of the motivating factors propelling the offender can affect both the likelihood of reporting and engaging in self-protective measures. The current study proposes to expand this literature by examining the relationship between the victim's perception of the offender's motivation, level of mental distress, and the likelihood of reporting and utilizing self-protective measures. To do so, the study uses the 2006 National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), which includes the Stalking Victimization Supplement (SVS). Specifically, the current study examines (1) the relationship between perceived offender motivation and mental distress, (2) the relationship between mental distress and likelihood of reporting and engaging in self-

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protective measures, and (3) the relationship between perceived offender motivation and likelihood of reporting and engaging in self-protective measures.

The following chapters proceed as follows. Chapter 2 provides a review of the current literature on the definition, prevalence, and dynamics of stalking, as well as the relevant literature on the motivations behind stalking, the overall effects of stalking, and the likelihood of reporting and utilizing self-protective measures by victims. Chapter 3 presents an overview of the current study, including the specific research questions and the proposed hypotheses. Chapter 4 discusses the methodology of the study, including the operationalization of the dependent and independent variables, as well as an overview of the descriptive statistics of the sample. Lastly, Chapter 5 presents the results of the analysis, while Chapter 6 provides a discussion of the findings, limitations, and implications of the current study.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Stalking Definition

California passed the first law, in 1990, that criminalized the act of stalking. The legislation was in response to a series of stalking-related murders in the late 1980s. Within three years, all 50 states passed similar anti-stalking laws. However, as of 2019, only twelve countries, including the United States (U.S.), have some form of law forbidding this crime. In the U.S., the federal stalking laws declare that stalking entails a person engaging in repeated unwanted behavior towards another individual that (a) places that individual in reasonable fear of serious bodily harm to either themselves, an immediate family member, or spouse/intimate partner and (b) causes or is expected to cause substantial emotional distress to that individual (The National Center for Victims of Crime, 2013).

The current state statutes on stalking in the U.S. vary based on the pattern of behavior, level of fear, and standard of fear. Currently, half of the states require that there be two or more separate instances where the offender harasses the victim, while 47% requires there to be proof of an "established pattern of harassment" (The National Center of Victims of Crime, 2018). In addition, 53% of states do not acknowledge stalking to be a felony until the second offense, or when the crime involves aggregating factors such as possession of a deadly weapon, and/or violation of parole or court order (The National Center for Victims of Crime, 2012; 2018). Furthermore, half of the states require proof that the victim felt fear as a result of the behavior of the offender, while also requiring that a reasonable person would agree to that perception of fear; this requirement aligns with the academic criteria for stalking (Nobles & Fox, 2017, p.52).

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Following the outlined criteria, various behaviors may constitute stalking. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS, 2017), stalking behaviors include, "making unwanted phone calls, sending unsolicited or unwanted letters or e-mails, following or spying on the victim, showing up at places without a legitimate reason, waiting at places for them, and/or leaving unwanted items, presents or flowers." Likewise, the Center for Family Safety and Healing (2018) provided an extensive list of stalking-like behaviors that included vandalizing or damaging the victim's property, stealing and reading the victim's mail, spreading rumors about the victim, tapping phone lines, and/or making threats to the victim or those close to the victim. Furthermore, stalking behaviors can be further distinguished by the medium through which the harassment is conducted. Cyberstalkers utilize the internet as an accessible medium through which they can harass and threaten their victims, and albeit not having physical contact with the victim, their behaviors can be nonetheless threatening.

Prevalence and Dynamics of Stalking

Variation in the definition of stalking results in differing estimates of the prevalence of victimization. Despite this variation, estimates suggest that a substantial proportion of the population has experienced some form of stalking in their lives. Recent estimates from the National Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS, 2015) suggest that nearly 1 in 6 women in the U.S. have been victims of stalking at some time in their lives. The prevalence of cyberstalking has also been assessed, with national estimates from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS, 2009) reporting that 1 in 4 stalking victims are victims of cyberstalking; such findings could indicate a heightened risk of stalking victimization in recent years. These heightened estimates suggest that stalking may also be a precursor to other forms of victimization. For example, McFarlane and colleagues (1999) reported that from their sample of

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141 femicide cases, 76% had been stalked prior to their murder, and of the 65 cases of attempted femicide incidents, the prevalence of stalking was 85%.

Stalking is a serious problem found not only in the United States, but across other countries. According to the Office for National Statistics, in 2017, nearly 250,000 individuals reported being victims of stalking in Great Britain, a nearly 36% increase from these reported estimates in 2016 (Elkin, 2018). In addition, according to the National Police Agency in Japan, in 2017, the police recognized 23,079 stalking cases, an increase of 1.5% from 2016 (National Police Agency, 2017). Lastly, in a study of the prevalence of stalking among Finnish university students, Bjorklund, Hakkanen-Nyholm, Sheridan, and Roberts (2010) found that one fourth of the participants reported being a victim of stalking at least once, while another fourth reported experiencing more than two episodes of stalking in their lifetime (Bjorklund, Hakkanen-Nyholm, Sheridan, & Roberts, 2010).

In addition to the measurement of overall prevalence, estimates vary across demographic characteristics. The BJS (2012) reported that the percentage of persons stalked dwindles with age, with individuals between the ages of 18 and 24 experiencing the highest prevalence of stalking victimization (Catalano, 2012). Moreover, Ravensberg and Miller's (2003) review of the literature also indicates that young adults, particularly college students, are the most vulnerable population for stalking victimization. The authors attribute this finding to both the structure of college life and the developmental deficits in social skills by college students. Victims of stalking are also more likely to be women, divorced/separated or never married, and from lower socioeconomic statuses. Lastly, while Non-Hispanics and Hispanics are equally likely to experience stalking, Asians and Pacific Islanders are less likely than Whites to experience stalking (Catalano, 2012).

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Whereas the literature on the correlates of victimization is fairly consistent, studies examining demographic characteristics of perpetrators is less consistent. For example, Mullen, Pathe, Purcell and Stuart (1999) found that among the stalkers in their sample, 79% were male, with a median age of 38. Alternatively, Nobles and colleagues (2009) study found that in their sample, 64% of women were stalking perpetrators versus 36% of men. One possible explanation provided by Nobles and colleagues for the mixed findings is the possibility that women are more likely to report their participation in stalking-like behaviors than men. Likewise, the mixed findings can also be attributed to the difference in the operationalization of stalking victimization and perpetration among studies.

Despite the inconsistencies mentioned above, the literature has continuously found that the victims of stalkers tend to include ex-partners (34%), profession or work contacts (23%), and strangers (14%) (Mullen, Pathe, Purcell, & Stuart, 1999). For example, studies on cyberstalking have found that stalking tends to occur in ex-partner relationships with victims more likely to be women, and perpetrators more likely to be men (Dressing et al., 2011; Dressing et al., 2014; Marganski & Melander, 2018). Despite this similarity between traditional and cyberstalking, Pittaro (2007) found that cyberstalkers are more likely than traditional stalkers to select their victims at random. This finding may be due to the wider range of victims that cyberstalkers can access through various online chatrooms or social media platforms. Overall, the dynamics of stalking illustrate the heighten risk of victimization, especially among women. In addition to differential risk, dynamics of stalking vary by the perpetrators' motivations. The next section discusses this literature.

Motivation

As reviewed earlier, stalking was historically thought to stem from unrequited love or the

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result of a dissolving intimate relationship. As such, it was considered a relationship problem, outside the purview of criminal law. Even now, there is a reluctance across both genders to characterize harassing behaviors as stalking when the victim was in a prior romantic relationship with the offender, as opposed to an acquaintance or stranger relationship (Phillips, Quirk, Rosenfeld, & O'Connor, 2004). This is particularly troubling since prior studies have continuously found that more than half of stalking cases constitute partner or ex-partner stalking and that victimization during a romantic relationship can be an important predictor of stalking after the relationship ends (Katz & Rich, 2015; Logan, 2012).

The domestic violence stalker is among the various typologies of perpetration identified by researchers. The domestic stalker, also called the rejected stalker, tends to be motived by the need to regain control over an ongoing or recently terminated relationship. The mentality that characterizes this type of stalker is "If I can't have him/her no one can" (Roberts & Dziegielewski, 1996). Domestic violence stalkers motivated by rejection have been found to be more likely to engage in violence compared to other forms of stalkers. Specifically, clinical studies on rejected stalkers, have highlighted their desire for both reconciliation and revenge that often leads to a sense of loss, anger, frustration, and jealousy (Mullen et al., 1999). Such heightened emotions can increase the likelihood the stalker will manifest their frustration through acts of violence. For example, McEwan, Mullen, MacKenzie and Ogloff (2009) found that in their sample of stalkers (n=211), rejected stalkers accounted for 38% of all serious violence, which was operationalized as violent behavior that was life threatening, caused bodily harm, and/or involved the actual or attempted use of a weapon and/or sexual assault (McEwan et al., 2009). In addition, prior studies have also found that rejected stalkers tend to subject the victim to unwanted approaches, unwanted telephone calls, and unwelcoming threats (Purcell, Moller,

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Flower, & Mullen, 2009). In some cases, rejected stalkers have perpetrated sexual assault on their victims, and have even reported victimizing third parties including the victim's parents or new romantic partner (Purcell et al., 2009).

The factors that predict the likelihood that domestic violence (rejected) stalkers will engage in physical violence have been widely assessed. Prior research has found that direct threats of violence during the relationship, along with the presence of jealousy and drug use by the former partner, were significant predictors of physical violence during stalking (Roberts, 2005). When comparing domestic violence abusers who stalk to those who do not, Melton (2007) found that women whose abusers had an alcohol or drug problem, tended to be controlling, and/or physically violent during the relationship were more likely to experience stalking than those women who did not report such factors (Melton, 2007). Such findings support prior research that physical violence, or at least the threat of violence, during the relationship is a strong predictor that domestic violence stalkers will engage in physical violence as a repertoire for their stalking-like behaviors (Burgess, Harner, Baker, Hartman, & Lole, 2001).

Domestic violence stalkers are not the only stalking typology identified by researchers. Roberts and Dziegielewski (1996) were among the first to categorize stalkers into typologies, which have been furthered identified and expanded in subsequent studies (Melton, 2000; Mullen, Pathe, Purcell, & Stuart, 1999; Roberts & Dziegielewski, 1996; Wright, Burgess, Burgess, Laszlo, McCracy, & Douglas, 1996). Such typologies include the delusional and nuisance stalker, the intimacy-seeker, the incompetent, the rejected and the predator (Melton, 2000; Mullen et al., 1999; Roberts et al., 1996; Wright et al., 1996). Most of these typologies share many similarities. As mentioned earlier, the rejected stalker identified by Mullen, Pathe, Purcell, and Stuart (1999) often overlaps with the domestic violence stalker identified by Roberts and

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Dziegielewski (1996) because they tend to be ex-partners. Furthermore, the rejected (domestic violence) stalker has also been found to have personality disorders, characteristic of delusional stalkers (Mullen et al., 1999).

The delusional stalker is characterized by their obsession and fixation on an unobtainable target. This type of stalker often creates an imaginary relationship with the target of their obsession, further increasing their need for the victim to acknowledge their relationship. Such need can become consuming, further increasing the risk of physical harm to the victim when he/she rejects them (Roberts et al., 1996; Wright et al., 1996). Similar to domestic violence stalkers, studies have found that delusional stalkers are also at a heightened risk to engage in violence and to have mental illnesses that influence their behavior. Delusional stalkers have been found to suffer from mental illnesses such as delusional disorder, histrionic personality disorder, and/or borderline personality disorder (Melton, 2000; Roberts & Dziegielewski, 1996). This form of stalking is motivated by fixation and obsession with the target that often leads to long-term victimization through the use of close-range and confrontational attacks that become more intense with time (Wright et al., 1996). In addition, research has shown that stalking motivated by delusion has the potential to lead to overt aggression, and in the worst cases, lethal violence. When the stalker's love and hope turn to hatred and resentment, upon rejection, the offender can turn to serious forms of violence including homicidal and suicidal ideation (Burgess, Baker, Greening, Hartman, Burgess, Douglas, & Halloran, 1997; Wright et al., 1996). Identifying the typologies of stalking perpetration is important because a perpetrator's motivation influences the dynamics, escalation, and the use and severity of violence against their victim.

Beyond identifying typologies, researchers have also examined the gender similarities and differences in the motivations for engaging in stalking. Previous studies have found that

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female stalkers are more likely than male stalkers to be motivated by the desire to establish a "loving intimacy" with the victim and less likely to be motivated by sexual factors (Purcell, Pathe, & Mullen, 2001). On the other hand, Meloy and Boyd (2003) found that female stalkers are motivated by anger/hostility, obsession, jealousy, retaliation and betrayal, which are also common motivations found among male stalkers (Meloy & Boyd, 2003). Finally, both men and women have also been found to engage in similar types of stalking identified by the literature: the rejected, the resentful or the incompetent stalker (Purcell et al., 2001). Such findings by Purcell and colleagues is unique, considering most typologies of stalking have been generated from male samples.

Upon identifying the different types of motivations behind stalking, which can be found in both men and women, researchers have begun to examine the relationship between the motivations for stalking, level of violence, *and* the mental distress of the victim. As mentioned earlier, the motivations for stalking can influence the type of behaviors they will engage in, particularly violent behavior. The use of such violent behavior can reasonably cause victims to report higher mental distress. Victims of stalking in the context of intimate partner abuse have reported increases in levels of depression, PTSD, fear, and anger, as well as interpersonal consequences (Kamphuis & Emmelkamp, 2000; Melton, 2007). Victims have reported that their victimization interferes with their ability to maintain relationships due to their inability to trust people following the stalking (Kamphuis, Emmelkamp, & Bartak, 2003). Such interference disrupts the social support system in the victims' lives by isolating and alienating them from their loved ones, which can enhance the effectiveness of the stalking (Melton, 2007). The following section more thoroughly discusses the physical and emotional consequences of stalking victimization.

The Physical and Emotional Effects of Stalking Victimization

Severe violence carried out by stalkers is relatively rare; however, rates for violent behavior (grabbing, punching, slapping, or fondling) range between 30 and 40% in most published studies (James & Farnham, 2003). In particular, Thomas, Purcell, Pathe and Mullen (2008) found that 17% of their sample (n=432) had been physically attacked by their stalker, with previous threats, victim-stalker relationship, and age serving as factors that increase the likelihood of physical harm. Likewise, when comparing "relentlessly stalked" battered women to "infrequently stalked" battered women, Mechanic, Uhlmansiek, Weaver, and Resick (2000) found that relentlessly stalked battered women were more likely to report more "…severe physical violence, sexual assault and emotional abuse, increased post-separation assault and stalking, increased rates of depression and PTSD, and more extensive use of strategic responses to abuse."

Beyond physical injuries resulting from violent conflict, victims of stalking suffer mental and emotional trauma. In their study of the relationship between features of stalking and psychopathology of victims, Blaauw, Winkel, Arensman, Sheridan, and Freeve (2002) found that stalking victims exhibited symptoms of diagnosable psychiatric disorders, particularly somatic symptoms, anxiety and insomnia, social dysfunction, and severe depression. Prior research has also found that the higher the level of stalking reported, operationalized as the frequency of occurrence and subjective distress, the higher the levels of helplessness, anxiety, PTSD, and depression reported by victims (Turmanis & Brown, 2006). Likewise, studies on cyberstalking have found that victims tend to report depression, isolation, anxiety, and hypervigilance, as adverse effects of their victimization (Haron & Yusof, 2010). When comparing the effects of stalking across gender, studies have found that women are more likely to report these adverse

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effects, as well as psychosocial impairments caused by mental health issues compared to male victims (Kuehner, Gass, & Dressing, 2012). Lastly, prior studies have found that victims of stalking are more likely to report an increased number of posttraumatic stress symptoms, with women being twice as likely to report hyperarousal symptoms, than women with no history of severe forms of stalking victimization, even while controlling for other types of life stressors, including intimate partner violence (Fleming, Newton, Fernandez-Botran, Miller, & Burns, 2013; Westrup, Fremouw, Thompson, & Lewis, 1999).

In addition to the psychological and emotional effects, there are interpersonal and occupational consequences resulting from stalking victimization (Abrams & Robinson, 2002). Stalking victimization affects the victim's employment by reducing their attendance at work due to mental health issues or time needed to attend criminal justice proceedings that relate to their case. Likewise, Pathe and Mullen (1997) found in their sample of 100 stalking victims that 53% had to change or end their employment, while 39% had to move homes due to their victimization. Despite the harms associated with stalking, victims continue to be unlikely to report their victimization to police compared to victims of other violent crimes. The next section discusses the extent and correlates of reporting stalking victimization to law enforcement.

Likelihood of Reporting

Despite the widespread and sometimes severe consequences associated with stalking victimization, victims do not seek formal help. In a national-level study of stalking among college women, Fisher, Cullen, and Turner (2002) found that 13% of their sample had been stalked in the past academic year; however, 83% of the incidents were not reported to police. Likewise, Buhi, Clayton and Surrency (2009) found similar results in their study of help-seeking behaviors among college women. Particularly, the study found that half of the women reporting

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stalking victimization also reported that they did not seek help from anyone (including police), and of those who did, the majority reported to family (29%) and friends (90%).

Misperceptions towards stalking victimization can decrease the likelihood of reporting among victims. Studies have found that respondents have difficulties in defining stalking. For example, Sheridan, Gillet and Davis (2000) found little consensus among the female participants in their study as to which behaviors constitute stalking after being provided with 40 intrusive behaviors. The behaviors that elicited less agreement on by participants were more trivial in nature (e.g. sending unsolicited items, letters, or gifts, making repeated unwanted phone calls, and/or following the victim) compared to more severe behaviors (e.g. verbal and physical violence), which most participants agreed upon constituted stalking (Sheridan, Gillet, & Davis, 2000). When examining perceptual differences by gender, the literature has found that women are more likely to perceive stalking as prevalent, harmful, and more likely to be perpetrated by an ex-partner compared to men. Conversely, men are more likely to blame the victims, perceive the offender as a stranger, and see stalking as a celebrity issue (Lambert, Smith, Geistman, Cluse-Tolar & Jiang, 2013). Such findings, as Lambert and colleagues note, may be due to either a lack of knowledge or confusion on various components of stalking victimization. These findings suggest that definitional confusion surrounding stalking, can affect the likelihood that victims will identify their experiences as a crime (Jordan, Wilcox, &Pritchard, 2007; McNamara & Marsil, 2012; Menard & Cox, 2016). The inability to perceive such unwanted behavior as stalking can decrease the likelihood that victims will report their stalkers to police (Menard & Cox, 2016).

Just as definitional misperceptions among participants have been identified, misconstrued attitudes surrounding the deleterious nature and consequences of stalking have also been

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explored by researchers. For example, in their examination of community members and police officers' attitudes towards stalking victimization, McKeon, McEwan, and Luebbers (2014) found that participants in their sample exemplify beliefs that "downplay, excuse, and normalize stalking behavior." Furthermore, the study found that men were more likely to endorse such underlying attitudes, which included victim-blaming, and perceiving stalking as non-serious and romantic (McKeon, McEwan, & Luebbers, 2014). Likewise, prior research has shown that both men and women are more likely to voice greater concern for the victim when the offender is a man, and the victim is a woman, than when the offender is a woman, and the victim is a man (Finnegan & Fritz, 2012). Taken together, these findings suggest that both men and women have attitudes that downplay the seriousness of stalking generally, and especially when it involves female perpetrators. These attitudes can affect the likelihood of reporting among all victims, especially male victims (Sheridan & Scott, 2010).

Characteristics surrounding the dynamics of stalking, such as offense seriousness and victim-offender relationship, have also been examined to determine their effect on the likelihood of reporting. For example, Reyns and Englebrecht (2010) found that the more serious the crime, operationalized as experiencing property damage, intimidation, threats and loss of work time, the more likely victims were to report their victimization to the police (Reyns & Englebrecht, 2010). The data has also shown that the likelihood of reporting diminishes when the victim knows their offender; however, in the case of cyberstalking, victims are actually more likely to report when they know their offender (Cass & Mallicoat, 2014; Reyns & Englebrecht, 2010). Beyond traditional measures of offense severity, fearfulness, is perhaps the most salient predictions of reporting. When Reyns and Englebrecht (2014) included 'fear of victimization' in their analysis, the researchers found that the predictor variables had an indirect effect on the likelihood of

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reporting when their effect on level of fear was accounted for (Reyns & Englebrecht, 2014). These findings suggest that perception of fear can be a mediating factor between predictor variables and the likelihood of reporting to police, while also suggesting a direct link between perceptions of fear and likelihood of reporting. Definitional misperceptions, misconstrued attitudes, offense seriousness, and victim-offender relationship all affect the likelihood a victim of stalking will report their victimization to law enforcement. However, reporting one's victimization to police is just one form of self-protection that victims of stalking can engage in. The next section discusses self-protective measures victims of stalking can engage in to protect themselves.

Self-Protective Measures

Self-protective measures can be both cognitive and behavioral strategies that a person engages in to reduce the likelihood of victimization or severity, particularly through acts that reduce their accessibility as a target, their contact with the perpetrator, and their mental distress. Nearly all the identified coping strategies by the literature can be categorized into one of three behavioral coping strategies identified by Podana and Imriskova (2016), which include proactive, avoidance, and passive behavior (Amar & Alexy, 2010). The fist behavioral coping strategy is proactive behavior, which is defined as active attempts by the victim to solve their situation, which has been found to be predominantly present among women (Podana & Imriskova, 2016). Studies on cyberstalking and traditional stalking victimization have found that victims of both forms of stalking engage in proactive measures, including changing the way one goes to work or school, confronting the stalker, taking self-defense classes, changing one's phone number, and/or installing security systems or call blocking, among others (Amar, 2006; Fremouw, Westrup, & Pennypacker, 1997; Nobles, Reyns, Fox, & Fisher, 2014). Among the

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least utilized proactive strategies are calling the police or obtaining a restraining order (Fremouw et al., 1997). The second coping strategy is avoidance behavior, which is characterized as attempts to evade the stalker through moving away tactics (Podana & Imriskova, 2016). Although not common, victims of stalking have reported the need to move to a new city or state, change residence, and/or change employment (Amar, 2006). The last coping strategy is passivity, which is defined as either not changing one's behavior or ignoring the offender, which is most likely to be present among males (Podana & Imriskova, 2016). Passive behaviors include minimizing the problem, distancing oneself, avoiding contact with the perpetrator and/or ignoring the problem (Amar, 2006; Amar & Alexy, 2010).

Interestingly, Podana and Imriskova (2016) found that the use of proactive strategies, compared to avoidance or passive coping strategies, was associated more with an increased perception of fear. Specifically, women who engaged in proactive behaviors were more likely to express greater fear than both male victims who also engaged in proactive behaviors, and females who engaged in avoidance and passive coping strategies (Podana & Imriskova, 2016). Although such findings could indicate that proactive behaviors lead to an increase in fear, it is more plausible that the presence of fear perpetuated by previous threats or experiences can lead a victim to engage in more proactive strategies to cope with their current victimization.

The implications of the findings above, have led scholars to employ a routine activities approach as a framework to study how proximity to motivated offenders and suitability of individuals as targets affect the probability that an individual will engage in self-protective measures (guardianship). Of particular interest, Tewksbury and Mustaine's (1999; 2003) studies found that (1) self-protective measures can decrease stress and make people feel safe in their homes and communities, and (2) victims who carry weapons for self-protection had higher odds

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of being stalked than victims who do not carry such weapons (Mustaine & Tewksbury, 1999). Similar to Podana and Imriskova's (2016) findings, the most logical explanation for these results is that the utilization of such protective measures was a response to past stalking victimization. Further indicating that fear and prior victimization precede self-protective measures.

Although self-protective measures are designed to prevent or reduce exposure to a stalker, they may increase the likelihood and severity of violence, particularly by intimates. Certain protective measures, including using security devices and receiving medical treatment, have also been found to double the likelihood of experiencing severe Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) (Messing, O'Sullivan, Cavanaugh, Webster, & Campbell, 2017). Other protective strategies used by victims such as utilizing advocacy services, safety planning strategies, and increasing home security, have not been associated with an increase in violence or abuse by the stalker (Messing et al., 2017). On the other hand, studies have found more positive results when examining self-protective measures by victims of intimate partner violence. Despite the extensive research on the types of self-protective measures victims can engage in, there remains much to be known about the factors that motivate victims of stalking to engage in the coping strategies discussed in this section.

Summary

The current chapter has provided a general overview of stalking. Particularly, the chapter discussed the various components most criminal statutes and disciplines require for an act or reoccurring acts to be labeled as stalking. The chapter also provided the prevalence of stalking victimization within the United States and foreign countries, as well as an overview of the dynamics of stalking. The chapter further discussed the motivations for stalking based on the different types of stalking identified by the literature, and how such motivations can influence

the use of physical violence and the mental distress reported by victims. In addition, the chapter discussed how despite the vast amount of research that shows both physical and emotional effects caused by stalking, most individuals choose to not report their victimization. Lastly, the chapter concluded by discussing the use of self-protective measures by victims, and how such measures can have an effect on future victimization.

CHAPTER III: CURRENT STUDY

Chapter II discussed the expanding research on the motivations behind stalking, the mental and physical consequences of stalking victimization, and the likelihood of reporting to police and engaging in self-protective measures, while acknowledging the lack of integration among these bodies of literature. The current study aims to contribute to this gap in the literature by examining the relationships between perceived motivation, level of mental distress, and the likelihood of reporting and engaging in self-protective measures among victims. Figure 1 illustrates the hypothesized relationships based on prior research discussed in Chapter 2:

H1. The victim's perception of the motivation for the stalking will be related to the likelihood the victim will report mental distress.

H2. The victim's level of mental distress will then increase the odds that the victim will report their victimization to police and engage in self-protective measures.

H3. The victim's perception of the motivation for the stalking will be related to likelihood the victim will report their victimization to police and engage in self-protective measures.
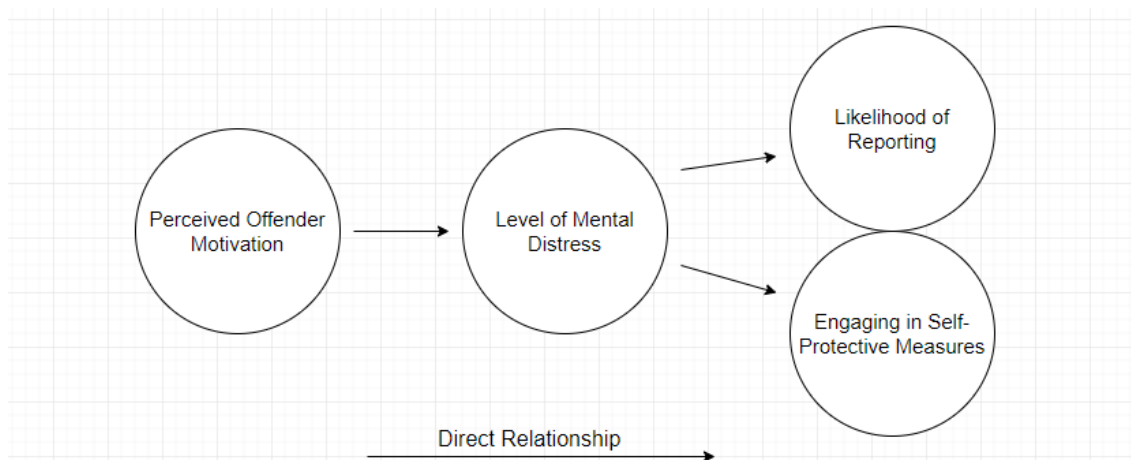
Figure 1. The current study's hypothesized relationship

Despite the growing research on stalking victimization among college students and the general public, to the author's knowledge, no body of literature has explored these specific relationships. With the increase in stalking victimization rates in recent years, it becomes crucial that we integrate these bodies of research to further our understanding of stalking in its complex form. Using the 2006 National Crime Victimization Survey: Stalking Victimization Supplement (NCVS-SVS), the current study aims to explore these direct and indirect relationships so that we can be better equipped to *identify, intervene and provide* victims of stalking with the proper help. The following chapters discuss the current study's methodology, analytical strategy, results, and conclusion.

CHAPTER IV: METHODOLOGY

Data

The data for the study were obtained from the National Crime Victimization Survey:

Stalking Victimization Supplement (NCVS-SVS; 2006), which was a national survey

administered by the United States Department of Justice. The SVS was a one-time supplement to

the annual NCVS to obtain information on the "prevalence, characteristics, and consequences of

nonfatal stalking" (ICPSR, 2006). Household members who were 18 or older were eligible to

receive the SVS short-screening questionnaire, following the regular NCVS interview. Those

individuals who met the criteria for stalking were then administered the entire SVS (ICPSR,

2006).

The screening questionnaire included questions that addressed whether the respondent

had ever been "frightened, concerned, angered, or annoyed" by unwanted phone calls, letters, or

emails, and/or had someone follow or spy on them, wait outside or inside places for them, show

up at places where they were, left unwanted items, presents or flowers, and/or posted information

about them on the internet (ICPSR, 2006). If the respondent answered yes to any of the above

questions, they were asked if anyone had ever done that to them on more than one occasion, and

if so, had it occurred to them in the past 12 months. If the respondent reported that in the past 12

months, they had experienced such stalking-like behaviors, the respondent qualified to be given

the full SVS.

The sampling procedure for the NCVS consisted of a rotating panel survey. In a rotating

panel survey, households are randomly selected, and the household members who meet the

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criteria become part of the sample. Once in the sample, participants are interviewed every six months for three years (ICPSR, 2006). However, for the SVS, every household, whether they were part of the incoming or continuing rotation, was interviewed from January through June 2006. Furthermore, data was collected using paper and pencil interviewing and computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI). In paper and pencil interviewing, the household members were interviewed either in person or by phone, with the responses recorded on a paper instrument. This type of interview was used on 43.95% of the sample. On the other hand, with CATI, which was used on 41.97% of the sample, the interviewer administered the survey via telephone and recorded the respondent's answers (ICPSR, 2006). The remaining sample had a proxy, a household member, answer the questions for them either through telephone or personal interview. Proxy interviews were used when the parents refused to let the interviewer speak to their 12- or 13-year-old child, if the household member would not be available during the interview period, and/or if the household member was considered physically or mentally unable to answer the questions (ICPSR, 2006).

Sample

Of the 78,741 NCVS respondents who went through the interview, 65,272 (82.9%) were eligible to participate in the Stalking Victimization Supplement screening interview (ICPSR, 2006). The remaining 13,469 (17.12%) respondents were non-interviews, which either meant the respondent was an NCVS non-interview, the respondent was an NCVS interview, but was unable or unwilling to participate in the SVS interview, the respondent was physically or unable to complete the SVS interview, and/or the respondent's proxy was either unable or unwilling to give a proxy SVS interview (ICPSR, 2006). Of the 65,272 respondents who filled out the screening questionnaire, 4,164 (6.38%) reported to be frightened, conferenced, angered, or

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annoyed by stalking-like behaviors. Furthermore, of those 4,164 respondents, 1,686 (40.49%) reported to experience those unwanted contacts or harassing behaviors on more than one occasion within the past 12 months. Therefore, the sample for the current study includes those 1,686 respondents who reported the criteria for stalking as defined by the NCVS-SVS.

Table 1 provides the descriptive statistics of the demographic variables for the overall NCVS sample (N=78,741). As shown in Table 1, the average respondent age was 47 years old (SD=17.47), with an age range from 18 to 90. The sex composition of the sample was fairly proportionate, with men comprising 47.42% of the sample, and women comprising 52.58% of the sample. The racial composition of the sample was as follows: Whites represented 83.22% of the sample, Blacks represented 10.42%, Asians 4.42%, American Indians 0.63%, and Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders 0.33%. Furthermore, 11.45% of the sample identified as Hispanic. Regarding marital status, more than half of the sample was married (58.88%), followed by never married (21.92%), divorced/separated (11.45%), and widowed (6.44%). Lastly, in regard to the respondents' education, the majority of respondents obtained a high school diploma (31.38%), followed by an undergraduate degree (24.03%), some college (19.07%), a graduate degree (12.51%), some high school (8.24%), and no high school (4.97%).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Overall NCVS 2006 Sample (N=78,471)

	N	%	Mean	Std. Dev.	Variance	Range
Age			46.73	17.47	305.09	18-90
Sex						
Male	37,339	47.42%				
Female	41,402	52.58%				
Race						
White	65,532	83.22%				
Black	8,206	10.42%				
American Indian	497	0.63%				
Asian	3,484	4.42%				
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	260	0.33%				
Other	762	0.98%				
Ethnicity						

Table 1. (Continued)						
	N	%	Mean	Std. Dev.	Variance	Range
Hispanic	9,018	11.45%				
Non-Hispanic	68,899	87.50%				
Marital Status						
Married	46,362	58.88%				
Widowed	5,071	6.44%				
Divorced/Separated	9,019	11.45%				
Never Married	17,257	21.92%				
Education						
Nursery school to 8th grade	3,909	4.97%				
Some high school, no diploma	6,488	8.24%				
High school graduate	24,550	31.18%				
Some college, no degree	15,019	19.07%				
Undergraduate Degree (A.A./B.A.)	18,917	24.03%				
Graduate Degree (M.A., Ph.D., etc.)	7,099	12.51%				

On the other hand, Table 2 provides the descriptive statistics of the demographic variables for the current study's sample (N=1,686). As shown in Table 2, the average respondent age was 40.54 years old (SD = 15.22), with an age range from 18 to 90. The sex distribution of the sample consisted of men comprising 32.41% of the sample, and women comprising 67.59% of the sample. The racial distribution of the sample consisted of Whites representing 84.12% of the sample, Blacks representing 10.13%, American Indians representing 0.95%, Asians representing 2.37%, and Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders representing 0.12%. Furthermore, 8.06% of the sample identified as Hispanic. Regarding marital status, 38.54% of the sample was married, followed by 32.10% never married, 24.82% divorced/separated, and 4.53% widowed. Lastly, the majority of respondents reported obtaining a high school diploma (27.63%), followed by some college (26.56%), an undergraduate degree (26.20%), a graduate degree (9.45%), some high school (8.31%), and no high school (1.85%).

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Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Sample NCVS 2006 (N=1,686)

	N	%	Mean	Std. Dev.	Variance	Range
Age			40.54	15.22	231.69	18-90
Sex						
Male	547	32.41%				
Female	1,141	67.59%				
Race						
White	1,420	84.12%				
Black	171	10.13%				
American Indian	16	0.95%				
Asian	40	2.37%				
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	2	0.12%				
Other	39	2.31%				
Ethnicity						
Hispanic	136	8.06%				
Non-Hispanic	1,534	90.88%				
Marital Status						
Married	646	38.54%				
Widowed	76	4.53%				
Divorced/Separated	416	24.82%				
Never Married	538	32.10%				
Education						
Nursery school to 8th grade	31	1.85%				
Some high school, no diploma	139	8.31%				
High school graduate	462	27.63%				
Some college, no degree	444	26.56%				
Undergraduate Degree (A.A./B.A.)	438	26.20%				
Graduate Degree (M.A., Ph.D., etc.)	158	9.45%				

Measures

Dependent Variables

Likelihood of Reporting

Likelihood of reporting was operationalized as whether the respondent sought help from police. This item was coded as either a 0 or 1, with a "0" indicating that the respondent did not report to the police, while a "1" indicated they did. All 1,686 respondents who reported

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experiencing stalking-like behaviors in the past 12 months stated they reported their victimization to at least one person. However, of the 1,606 who answered the item assessing whether they reported to police, only about 29% of the sample reported their victimization to police; findings that are consistent with prior research (Buhi, Clayton, & Surrency, 2009; Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2002).

Self-Protective Measures

As indicated in Table 3, self-protective measures were conceptualized in two ways, changes in routine activities and target hardening measures. Changes in routine activities was measured using the items that addressed the behaviors the respondent had engaged in to protect themselves in the past 12 months. Such forms of protection included taking time off work or school, changing or quitting job, changing the way they went to work or school, avoiding friends or relatives, changing their everyday activities, staying with friends or relatives or having them stay with them, moving residence, changing their appearance, and/or taking self-defense or martial arts classes.[1] As Table 3 indicates, changes in routine activities was operationalized as a count variable, with 66.88% of respondents indicating they made no changes in their routine activities as a result of their victimization. Subsequently, 15.94% reported one change, 6.87% reported two changes, 4.38% reported three changes, 2.49% reported four changes, and 1.60% reported five changes. Only 1.84% of respondents reported six or more changes in their routine activities.

Target hardening, on the other hand, consisted of behaviors that the victim engaged in that strengthened their protection by either making the stalking behavior more difficult and/or making them less attractive as targets. To assess target hardening, the current study utilized the

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[1] Please see Appendix for a table detailing descriptive statistics for the indicators used to measure routine activities.

participant's response to the items that asked whether they changed telephone numbers, social-security number, and/or email address, installed call blocking systems, changed or installed new locks or a security system, and/or obtained a weapon (pepper spray, gun, or other) as a response to their victimization in the past 12 months.[2] As Table 3 indicates, target hardening was also operationalized as a count variable, with 69.91% of respondents indicating they did not engage in target hardening behaviors. Subsequently, 18.36% of respondents indicated they engaged in one form of target hardening, while 7.17% reported engaging in two, 3.02% reported engaging in three, 1.07% reported engaging in four, 0.30% reported engaging in five, and 0.18% reported engaging in six forms of target hardening behaviors. Similar to the likelihood of reporting, all 1,686 (100%) respondents indicated they engaged in at least one form of self-protection.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Self-Protective Measures among Stalking Victims (N=1,686)

	N	%
Changes in Routine Activities		
0 (none)	1,129	66.88%
1	269	15.94%
2	116	6.87%
3	74	4.38%
4	42	2.49%
5	27	1.60%
6 +	31	1.84%
Target Hardening		
0 (none)	1,180	69.91%
1	310	18.36%
2	121	7.17%
3	51	3.02%
4	18	1.07%
5	5	0.30%
6	3	0.18%

Independent Variables

Perceived Motivations

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[2] Please see Appendix for a table detailing descriptive statistics for the indicators used to measure target hardening.

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Table 4 provides the descriptive statistics of the perceived motivations by the respondents. Perceived motivation was measured using the items that addressed the respondent's perception of why the person or persons they identified began to engage in stalking-like behaviors. Perceived motivation was operationalized using four dichotomous variables that were not mutually exclusive. As seen in Table 4, the first category was the victim's perception that the perpetrator just wanted attention and/or perceived the victim to want the attention. This category was also operationalized as respondents who reported yes to at least one of these measures on a 0,1 scale. As Table 4 indicates, 19.14% of the sample perceived the offender to be motivated by attention.

The second category was the victim's perception that the offender was stalking them as a form of control, which 783 (48.18%) respondents reported.[3] These items included stalking as a form of retaliation or scare-tactic (28.77%), to catch the respondent doing something (3.32%), to control them (23.84%), and/or to keep them in the relationship or from leaving (11.92%). A code of "0" indicated the victim did not perceive the stalking as a form of control, and "1" indicating they responded yes to at least one of these items. The third category was the victim's perception that the offender was motivated by a mental illness and/or alcohol/drug problem, which was reported by 21.91% of the sample. Specifically, the items asked if the respondent perceived the perpetrator's motivation to be influenced by alcohol or drugs, and/or because the perpetrator was mentally ill or emotionally unstable. Lastly, the fourth category was classified as "other," and was reported by 31.63% of the sample. Specifically, the category "other" included the victim's perception that the offender was motivated by convenience, cultural beliefs and/or other. Of the

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[3] Please see Appendix for a table detailing descriptive statistics for the indicators used to measure perceived motivation.

1,686 respondents, 1,625 (96.38%) reported at least one perceived motivation for the

perpetrator's behavior. The remaining 61 participants (3.62%) had no entry for the items

measuring perceived motivation, those participants were "coded as missing."

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Perceived Motivation among Stalking Victims (N=1,686)

	N	%
Stalking Motivated by Attention	311	19.14%
Stalking Motivated by Control	783	48.18%
Stalking Motivated by Delusion	356	21.91%
Stalking Motivated by Other	514	31.63%

Note. Percentages reflect valid cases (n=1,625). Cases are not mutually exclusive.

Mental Distress

Table 5 displays the descriptive statistics for the victim's mental distress at onset. To

assess mental distress at onset, the current study utilized the participant's response to the items

that asked whether the unwanted contacts or behavior made them feel anxious, concerned,

uncomfortable, worried, annoyed, angry, frightened/scared, depressed, helpless, physically ill,

and/or suicidal.[4] To measure mental distress at onset, the items were operationalized as both a

dichotomous and as a count variable. Mental distress was dichotomized using a 0,1 scale. A

score of "0" indicated the respondent experienced no mental distress or was only mildly

annoyed, while a score of "1" indicated the respondent experienced another emotion other than

annoyed. As Table 5 indicates, 37.76% of respondents reported no mental distress or being only

mildly annoyed, while 62.24% reported experiencing at least one negative emotion other than

annoyance.

The second way mental distress was operationalized was as a count variable. As

indicated in Table 5, 4.92% of the sample reported no mental distress at onset, while 54.68%

reported experiencing at least one negative emotion. Furthermore, 19.37% reported experiencing

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[4] Please refer to Appendix for descriptive statistics of the measures for mental distress.

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at least 2 negative emotions, 9.36% reported experiencing three, 4.44% reported experiencing four, 2.67% reported experiencing five, 4.09% reported experiencing six, and 0.47% reported experiencing seven negative emotions as a result of their stalking victimization. Of the 1,686 participants, 1,605 (95.2%) respondents reported experiencing at least one emotion at the beginning of their victimization, the other 81 (4.80%) respondents did not respond to these items.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics of Self-Protective Measures among Stalking Victims (N=1,686)

	N	%
Mental Distress at Onset – dichotomous variable		
No mental distress or mildly annoyed	606	37.76%
Experienced at least one negative emotion	999	62.24%
Mental Distress at Onset – count variable		
0 (none)	83	4.92%
1	923	54.68%
2	327	19.37%
3	158	9.36%
4	75	4.44%
5	45	2.67%
6	69	4.09%
7	8	0.47%

Note. Percentages reflect valid cases (n=1,605).

Control Variables

Medium of Stalking

Table 6 provides the descriptive statistics for the medium of stalking, which was measured in three ways. Medium of stalking was based on whether the perpetrator engaged in cyberstalking only, traditional stalking only, both traditional and cyberstalking, or neither. These categories were measured dichotomously (0 = no, 1 = yes). Cyberstalking was assessed using items that measured whether the perpetrator had used methods of internet communication to harass or threaten the respondent. Such items included the use of email, instant messenger, chat rooms, blogs, message or bulletin boards, and/or the use of video/digital cameras, spyware, electronic listening devices or bugs, and/or global positioning system to monitor or track the

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respondent.[5] Of the initial 1,686 respondents, 1,520 (90.15%) respondents provided at least one entry to the items measuring medium of stalking, the remaining 9.85% of the sample was missing data. Of the 1,520 valid cases, 15.39% of the sample reported experiencing only cyberstalking-like behaviors. The low response rate for these items was due to the lack of knowledge by the respondents on which tactics the perpetrator used to stalk them.

On the other hand, traditional stalking, which serves as the reference category for analysis, was measured using items that indicated a physical presence of the perpetrator in the victim's life. Such items, included making unwanted phone calls, sending unsolicited or unwanted letters or emails, following or spying on the respondent, waiting in places for them, showing up at places the respondent was even though they have no business being there, leaving unwanted items, presents, or flowers, and/or posting information or spreading rumors about them.[6] Of the 1,520 valid cases, 28.03% indicated experiencing only traditional stalking-like behaviors. Additionally, if the participant reported both traditional and cyberstalking-like behaviors, it was coded as "both," which was reported by 10.59% of the sample. Lastly, participants who reported neither traditional nor cyberstalking-like behaviors compromised 45.99% of the sample.

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics for Medium of Stalking among Stalking Victims (N=1,686)

	N	%
Medium of Stalking		
Traditional Stalking	426	28.03%
Cyberstalking	234	15.39%
Both	161	10.59%
Neither	699	45.99%

Note. Percentages reflect valid cases (n=1,520).

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[5] Please refer to Appendix for descriptive statistics of the measures for cyberstalking.

[6] Please refer to Appendix for descriptive statistics of the measures for traditional stalking.

Victim-Offender Relationship

Table 7 displays the descriptive statistics of the victim-offender relationship. As discussed in Chapter 2, the victim-offender relationship affects the likelihood that victims of stalking will report their victimization to police. The victim-offender relationship was measured using the item that asked, "What was the relationship of the person who did this/these things to you when the contacts or behavior first began"? The possible responses were re-coded on a 0,1 scale, with "0" indicating "no" and "1" indicating "yes" for each category. The possible responses were categorized to reflect the following relationships, stranger (11.09%), intimate partner or ex-partner (26.44%), non-partner relative (8.97%), friend or ex-friend (9.12%), acquaintance (26.98%), other non-relative (12.16%), and unable to identify the person (5.24%). The category "stranger" served as the reference category for the analysis. As indicated by the descriptive statistics, the most common relationships were partner or ex-partner, acquaintance, and/or other non-relative; findings that are aligned with prior research. Interestingly, 9.12% of the sample reported their friend or ex-friend to be the perpetrator, a finding not commonly found in prior studies. Of the 1,686 participants, 1,316 (78.05%) respondents indicated the victim-offender relationship, the remaining 21.95% was missing data due to the participant's response being out of the universe or residue.

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics of Victim-Offender Relationship among Stalking Victims (N=1,686)

	N	%
Victim-Offender Relationship		
Stranger	146	11.09%
Partner or ex-partner (IPV)	348	26.44%
Non-partner relative	118	8.97%
Friend or ex-friend	120	9.12%
Acquaintance	355	26.98%
Other non-relative	160	12.16%
Unable to identify the person	69	5.24%

Note. Percentages reflect valid cases (n=1,316).

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Perception of Stalking

As indicated in Chapter 2, whether the victim perceives the unwanted contacts or behavior as stalking may affect the likelihood of reporting and/or engaging in self-protective measures. The current study utilizes the item, asked at the end of the questionnaire, that addressed whether the respondent perceived any of the reported unwanted contacts or behavior as stalking. Of the 1,686 respondents, 633 (37.54%) reported that they perceived their victimization as stalking.

Physical Violence

Table 8 provides the descriptive statistics for the items used to operationalize the presence of physical violence during the stalking victimization. As indicated in Chapter 2, the more serious the stalking behaviors, usually characterized by physical violence, the more likely the victim is to report their victimization to police and engage in self-protective measures. To control for physical violence, the current study utilized the items in the supplement that addressed whether the perpetrator attacked or attempted to attack the respondent's child, attack the respondent's family member, attacked the respondent's friend/coworker, attacked the respondent's pet, and/or attacked or attempted to attack the victim by hitting or slapping them, chocking or strangling them, raping or sexually assaulting them, using a weapon, chasing or dragging them with a car, or some other way.[7] Physical violence was operationalized dichotomously, where a score of "0" indicating no physical violence, and a score of "1" indicating at least one physical violence incident. As indicated in Table 8, of the 1,591 respondents who answered the physical violence items, 17.35% reported at least one physical violence incident, while 82.65% reported no physical violence during their victimization.

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[7] Please refer to Appendix for descriptive statistics of the measures for physical violence.

Table 8. Descriptive Statistics of Physical Violence among the Sample (N=1,686)

	N	%
Physical Violence		
No physical violence	1,315	82.65%
At least one physical violence reported	276	17.35%

Note. Percentages reflect valid cases (n=1,591)

Demographic Variables

Table 9 displays the demographic variables controlled in the current study, which include age, sex, race, ethnicity and education. Age was operationalized as a continuous variable, with the average respondent being 40.54 years of age (SD=15.22). Sex was operationalized as male (32.41%) or female (67.59%), with male serving as the reference category. Furthermore, race was operationalized as White, Black, or other. As shown in Table 9, Whites represented 84.17% of the sample, Blacks represented 10.14%, and "other" represented 5.69% of the sample. Ethnicity was measured as Hispanic or Non-Hispanic, with 8.06% of the sample identifying as Hispanic. Marital status was operationalized using several categories, which included married (38.54%), widowed (4.53%), divorced/separated (24.82%), and never married (32.10%). Lastly, education was operationalized as respondents who had at least a high school education (37.80%), and respondents who had at least some college education (62.80%).

Table 9. Descriptive Statistics of Sample - Demographics (N=1,686)

	N	%	Mean	Std. Dev.	Variance	Range
Age			40.54	15.22	231.69	18-90
Sex						
Male	547	32.41%				
Female	1,141	67.59%				
Race						
White	1,420	84.17%				
Black	171	10.14%				
Other	96	5.69%				
Ethnicity						
Hispanic	136	8.06%				
Non-Hispanic	1,534	90.88%				
Marital Status						

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Table 9. (Continued)			
Married	646	38.54%	
Widowed	76	4.53%	
Divorced/Separated	416	24.82%	
Never Married	538	32.10%	
Education			
At least a high school education	632	37.80%	
At least some college education	1,040	62.80%	

Analytical Strategy

Various models were run to examine the relationship between perceived motivations, mental distress, likelihood of reporting to police, and likelihood of engaging in self-protective measures. Model 1 used logistic regression analysis to examine the relationship between perceived motivation and mental distress, operationalized as a dichotomous variable. In Model 2, the Poisson regression model was run to examine the relationship between perceived motivation and mental distress, operationalized as a count variable. Model 3 used logistic regression analysis to examine the relationship between perceived motivation and likelihood of reporting. Model 4 and 5 used a negative binomial regression to examine the relationship between perceived motivation and the likelihood in engaging in self-protective measures, operationalized as two separate count variables. Model 6 used a logistic regression analysis to test the relationship between mental distress and likelihood of reporting to police. Lastly, Models 7 and 8, ran a negative binomial regression to test the relationship between mental distress and likelihood of engaging in self-protective measures (changes in routine-activities and target hardening). The missing cases were handled using listwise deletion.

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CHAPTER V: RESULTS

A logit regression model was run for Model 1, which tested the relationship between perceived motivation and the presence of mental distress (H1). Overall, the model was statistically significant because the likelihood-ratio test, which was 133.87, exceeded the critical value, resulting in a p-value less than 0.05. This meant we could reject the null hypothesis (all the regression coefficients in the population equal zero) that our estimated model fitted no better than the null model with just the constant. Specifically, as shown in Table 10, Model 1 found that perceiving the offender to be motivated by delusion as opposed to not perceiving the offender to be motivated by delusion, increased the odds of reporting mental distress by 69.22%, holding other variables constant.[8] Furthermore, perceiving the offender to be motivated by some other reason as opposed to not perceiving the offender to be motivated by some other reason increased the odds of reporting mental distress by 52.17%, holding other variables constant. Perceiving the offender to be motivated by attention or control were not statistically significant predictors of reporting mental distress. Additionally, the model found that being a woman as opposed to a man increased the odds of reporting mental distress by 102.58%. The model also found that having at least some college education as opposed to only having a high school education increased the odds of reporting mental distress by 39.90%. Furthermore, the model found that perceiving the behaviors to be stalking as opposed to not perceiving the behaviors to be stalking increased the odds of reporting mental distress by 78.74%. Additionally, the model found that experiencing physical violence as opposed to not experiencing physical violence increased the odds of

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[8] Percent change was calculated using the following formula: $(e^{\wedge}(b) - 1) * 100$

reporting mental distress by 75.56%. Lastly, the model found that when the offender was a "other" non-relative as opposed to a stranger, the odds of reporting mental distress decreased by 47.49%. To account for the possibility that the measures in the model predicted each other with a substantial degree of accuracy, the variance inflation factor (VIF) test was run for all 8 models. Since the values of VIF did not exceed the accepted value of 4, it can be stated that all 8 models did not exhibit evidence of problematic multicollinearity, which would undermine the statistical significance of the independent variables.

Table 10. Logistic Regression Model of Mental Distress among Victims of Stalking, N = 1,165

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables	Logit
Presence of mental distress	Stalking motivated by attention	0.267
		(0.180)
	Stalking motivated by control	-0.060
		(0.159)
	Stalking motivated by delusion	0.526
		(0.172)**
	Stalking motivated by other	0.420
		(0.161)**
	Female	0.706
		(0.142)**
	Black	-0.254
		(0.218)
	Race "other"	0.585
		(0.322)
	Married	-0.077
		(0.176)
	Widowed	-0.194
		(0.397)
	Divorced/Separated	0.083
		(0.197)
	At least some college education	0.336
		(0.138)*
	Age in years	0.010
		(0.006)
	Cyberstalking	-0.143
		(0.219)
	Both mediums of stalking	0.061
		(0.266)
	Neither mediums of stalking	-0.067
		(0.166)

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Table 10. (Continued)

	Perceiving behavior as stalking	0.581 (0.144)**
	Physical Violence	0.563 (0.187)**
	Partner or ex-partner	0.183 (0.262)
	Friend	-0.530 (0.298)
	Acquaintance	0.058 (0.234)
	Non-partner relative	-0.133 (0.303)
	Other non-relative	-0.644 (0.269)*
	Unable to identify offender	0.049 (0.344)
	Constant	-0.925 (0.374)*
N - Observations		1,165
Chi2		133.87
Pseudo R2		0.09

* p<0.05; ** p<0.01

Next, Model 2 tested the relationship between perceived motivation and the level of

mental distress as a count variable (H1). A Poisson regression model was used over the negative

binomial regression model since the obtained statistic of the likelihood-ratio test of the

overdispersion parameter did not exceed the critical value, resulting in a p-value greater than

0.05. This meant we failed to reject the null hypothesis that the overdispersion parameter equaled

0, which would indicate no dispersion allowing us to use the Poisson model. Overall, Model 2

did significantly predict the level of mental distress reported by victims because the likelihood-

ratio test, which was 246.64, exceeded the critical value, resulting in a p-value less than 0.05.

Which meant the estimated model fitted the data better than the null model with only the

constant. As indicated in Table 11, the model found that perceiving the offender to be motivated

by attention as opposed to not perceiving the offender to be motivated by attention increased the

expected number of negative emotions by 15.12%, holding other variables constant. The model

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also found that perceiving the offender to be motivated by control (18.86%), delusion (21.91%) and other (21.05%) to significantly increase the expected number of negative emotions reported by the victim. The effect of the control variables on the dependent variable were substantively similar to Model 1, with the addition of medium and age. Specifically, the model found that being stalked through neither medium as opposed to being traditionally stalked decreased the expected number of negative emotions reported by the victim by 12.97%. Furthermore, a one-unit increase an age increased the expected number of negative emotions by 0.38%. Overall, Models 1 and 2 support H1, which predicted that the victim's perception of the motivation for the stalking would be related to the presence and level of mental distress reported by the victim.

Table 11. Poisson Regression Model of Mental Distress among Victims of Stalking, N = 1,166

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables	Poisson
Level of mental distress	Stalking motivated by attention	0.141 (0.053)**
	Stalking motivated by control	0.173 (0.051)**
	Stalking motivated by delusion	0.198 (0.050)**
	Stalking motivated by other	0.191 (0.048)**
	Female	0.288 (0.051)**
	Black	-0.075 (0.075)
	Race "other"	-0.077 (0.096)
	Married	-0.008 (0.059)
	Widowed	0.037 (0.131)
	Divorced/Separated	0.076 (0.061)
	At least some college education	0.066 (0.045)
	Age in years	0.004 (0.002)*
	Cyberstalking	-0.016 (0.067)

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Table 11. (Continued)

	Both mediums of stalking	0.096
		(0.073)
	Neither mediums of stalking	-0.139
		(0.053)**
	Perceiving behavior as stalking	0.104
		(0.045)*
	Physical Violence	0.284
		(0.051)**
	Partner or ex-partner	-0.004
		(0.087)
	Friend	-0.171
		(0.105)
	Acquaintance	-0.038
		(0.080)
	Non-partner relative	-0.145
		(0.102)
	Other non-relative	-0.118
		(0.093)
	Unable to identify offender	-0.087
		(0.132)
	Constant	0.015
		(0.126)
N - Observations		1,166
Chi2		246.64
Pseudo R2		0.06

* p<0.05; ** p<0.01

Model 3 tested the relationship between perceived motivation and the likelihood of

reporting to police (H3). The logit regression model indicated that our estimated model, with a

likelihood-ratio test of 172.28, was statistically significant. Specifically, as shown in Table 12,

Model 3 found that perceiving the offender to be motivated by attention as opposed to not

perceiving the offender to be motivated by attention, significantly decreased the odds of

reporting to police by 39.54%, holding other variables constant. On the other hand, perceiving

the offender to be motivated by delusion as opposed to not perceiving the offender to be

motivated by delusion, increased the odds of reporting to police by 59.05%. Perceiving the

offender to be motivated by control or some other reason were not statistically significant

predictors of reporting to police. Furthermore, the model found that being a woman as opposed

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to a man increased the odds of reporting to police by 42.38%. Interestingly, the model also found that having at least some college education as opposed to only a high school education decreased the odds of reporting to police by 34.43%. In addition, the model found that perceiving the behaviors to be stalking as opposed to not perceiving the behaviors to be stalking increased the odds of reporting to police by 106.50%. Lastly, the model found that the presence of physical violence as opposed to no physical violence increased the odds of reporting to police by 177.56%; findings that align with prior research.

Table 12. Logistic Regression Model of Likelihood of Reporting to Police among Victims of Stalking, N = 1,166

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables	Logit
Likelihood of reporting to police	Stalking motivated by attention	-0.503
		(0.186)**
	Stalking motivated by control	0.245
		(0.165)
	Stalking motivated by delusion	0.464
		(0.167)**
	Stalking motivated by other	0.171
		(0.162)
	Female	0.353
		(0.158)*
	Black	0.378
		(0.226)
	Race "other"	0.255
		(0.301)
	Married	0.144
		(0.189)
	Widowed	0.629
		(0.406)
	Divorced/Separated	0.108
		(0.199)
	At least some college education	-0.422
		(0.142)**
	Age in years	-0.002
		(0.006)
	Cyberstalking	-0.441
		(0.235)
	Both mediums of stalking	0.299
		(0.254)
	Neither mediums of stalking	0.006

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Table 12. (Continued)		
		(0.171)
	Perceiving behavior as stalking	0.725
		(0.146)**
	Physical Violence	1.021
		(0.167)**
	Partner or ex-partner	-0.014
		(0.273)
	Friend	-0.595
		(0.337)
	Acquaintance	-0.262
		(0.252)
	Non-partner relative	0.002
		(0.317)
	Other non-relative	0.384
		(0.281)
	Unable to identify offender	-0.552
		(0.442)
	Constant	-1.482
		(0.397)**
N- Observations		1,166
Chi2		172.28
Pseudo R2		0.12

* p<0.05; ** p<0.01

Model 4 tested the relationship between perceived motivation and changes in routine activities (H3). A negative binomial regression model was used over the Poisson regression model since the obtained statistic for the likelihood-ratio test of the overdispersion parameter did exceed the critical value, resulting in a p-value less than 0.05, which indicated that the assumption of equidispersion was not met. Overall the model did significantly predict the expected number of changes in routine activities (likelihood-ratio test = 341.46, p-value <0.05). As indicated by Table 13, the model found that perceiving the offender to be motivated by delusion as opposed to not perceiving the offender to be motivated by delusion, significantly increased the expected number of changes in routine activities by 31.86%, holding other variables constant. On the other hand, perceiving the offender to be motivated by either control, attention, or "other" did not significantly predict the expected number of changes in routine

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activities. Furthermore, Model 4 found that being a woman as opposed to a man, increased the expected number of changes in routine activities by 58.00%, while being divorced or separated as opposed to single increased the expected number of changes in routine activities by 33.21%. In addition, the model found that having at least some college education as opposed to only a high school education increased the expected number of changes in routine activities by 33.13%. Interestingly, a one-unit increase in age significantly decreased the expected number of changes in routine activities by 1.54%; meaning older victims were less likely than younger victims to make any changes in their routine activities as a result of their stalking victimization. In addition, the model found that while being stalked by both mediums as opposed to only being traditionally stalked increased the expected number of changes in routine activities by 64.09%, being stalked by neither medium decreased it by 21.59%. Furthermore, perceiving the behaviors to be stalking as opposed to not perceiving the behaviors to be stalking and experiencing physical violence as opposed to not experiencing physical violence increased the expected number of changes in routine activities by 62.68% and 118.54%, respectively. Lastly, the model found that the offender being a partner or ex-partner (243.08%), friend (170.98%), acquaintance (129.03%), non-partner relative (137.28%), or other non-relative (114.37%), as opposed to a stranger, significantly increased the expected number of changes in routine activities reported by the victim.

Table 13. Negative Binomial Regression Model of Changes in Routine Activities among Victims of Stalking, N = 1,166

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables	Negative Binomial
Number of changes in routine activities	Stalking motivated by attention	-0.126
		(0.114)
	Stalking motivated by control	0.176
		(0.108)
	Stalking motivated by delusion	0.277
		(0.104)**

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Table 13. (Continued)

Stalking motivated by other	0.096
	(0.109)
Female	0.457
	(0.110)**
Black	0.053
	(0.153)
Race "other"	0.095
	(0.197)
Married	0.129
	(0.125)
Widowed	0.029
	(0.323)
Divorced/Separated	0.287
	(0.127)*
At least some college education	0.286
	(0.097)**
Age in years	-0.016
	(0.004)**
Cyberstalking	0.049
	(0.140)
Both mediums of stalking	0.495
	(0.145)**
Neither mediums of stalking	-0.243
	(0.115)*
Perceiving behavior as stalking	0.486
	(0.096)**
Physical Violence	0.782
	(0.100)**
Partner or ex-partner	1.233
	(0.224)**
Friend	0.997
	(0.253)**
Acquaintance	0.829
	(0.221)**
Non-partner relative	0.864
	(0.256)**
Other non-relative	0.763
	(0.242)**
Unable to identify offender	-1.047
	(0.626)
Constant	-1.863
	(0.304)**
lnalpha	-0.292
	(0.139)*
N - Observations	1,166

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Table 13. (Continued)	
Chi2	341.46
Pseudo R2	0.12

* *p<0.05; ** *p<0.01*

Next, Model 5 tested the relationship between perceived motivation and engaging in target hardening behaviors (H3). A negative binomial model was run since the assumption of equidispersion was not met. Overall, the model significantly predicted the expected number of target hardening behaviors reported by the victim (likelihood-ratio test = 227.30, p-value <0.05). As indicated in Table 14, the model found that perceiving the offender to be motivated by control as opposed to not perceiving the offender to motivated by control significantly increased the expected number of target hardening behaviors by 27.09%, holding other variables constant. Additionally, perceiving the offender to be motivated by delusion as opposed to not perceiving the offender to be motivated by delusion, significantly increased the expected number of target hardening behaviors by 40.84%. On the other hand, perceiving the offender to be motivated by attention, or "other" did not significantly predict the expected number of target hardening behaviors reported by the victim. Furthermore, the model found that being a woman as opposed to a man significantly increased the expected number of target hardening behaviors by 70.10%. In addition, the model found that being married or divorced/separated as opposed to single increased the expected number of target hardening behaviors by 47.56% and 33.89%, respectively. The model also found that having some college education as opposed to only a high school education increased the expected number of target hardening behaviors by 32.47%, while experiencing physical violence as opposed to no physical violence increased the expected number of target hardening behaviors by 50.96%. Additionally, perceiving the behaviors to be stalking as opposed to not perceiving the behaviors to be stalking increased the expected number of target hardening behaviors by 64.09%. Furthermore, the model found that while being stalked

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by both mediums of stalking as opposed to being traditionally stalked increased the expected

number of target hardening behaviors by 47.59%, being stalked by neither form decreased it by

32.19%. Lastly, both a one-unit increase in age and being unable to identify the offender as

opposed to the offender being a stranger, decreased the expected number of target hardening

behaviors reported by the victim by 1.19% and 75.05%, respectively. Overall, Models 3,4, and 5

indicated that the only perceived motivation to significantly predict both the likelihood of

reporting to police and engaging in self-protective measures (H3) was delusion, with control

predicting only target hardening behaviors.

Table 14. Negative Binomial Regression Model of Target Hardening Behaviors among Victims
of Stalking, N = 1,166

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables	Negative Binomial
Engaging in target hardening behavior	Stalking motivated by attention	-0.071
		(0.122)
	Stalking motivated by control	0.240
		(0.118)*
	Stalking motivated by delusion	0.342
		(0.112)**
	Stalking motivated by other	0.138
		(0.114)
	Female	0.531
		(0.121)**
	Black	0.086
		(0.161)
	Race "other"	0.130
		(0.204)
	Married	0.389
		(0.132)**
	Widowed	0.367
		(0.329)
	Divorced/Separated	0.292
		(0.139)*
	At least some college education	0.281
		(0.104)**
	Age in years	-0.012
		(0.005)**
	Cyberstalking	0.045
		(0.147)

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Table 14. (Continued)

	Both mediums of stalking	0.389
		(0.151)**
	Neither mediums of stalking	-0.388
		(0.124)**
	Perceiving behavior as stalking	0.495
		(0.103)**
	Physical Violence	0.412
		(0.110)**
	Partner or ex-partner	0.242
		(0.197)
	Friend	0.036
		(0.234)
	Acquaintance	-0.332
		(0.195)
	Non-partner relative	-0.087
		(0.235)
	Other non-relative	0.026
		(0.210)
	Unable to identify offender	-1.388
		(0.538)**
	Constant	-1.534
		(0.293)**
	lnalpha	-0.637
		(0.221)**
N - Observations		1,166
Chi2		227.30
Pseudo R2		0.10

* p<0.05; ** p<0.01

Subsequently, Model 6 examined the relationship between the level of mental distress

and the likelihood of reporting to police (H2). The logit regression model indicated that the

estimated model fit better than the null model with just the constant (likelihood-ratio test =

164.36, p-value < 0.05). Specifically, as shown in Table 15, the model found that a one-unit

increase in the number of negative emotions reported by the victim significantly increased the

odds of reporting to police by 13.93%, holding other variables constant. Furthermore, the effect

of the control variables on the likelihood of reporting were substantively similar to Model 3, with

the addition that being cyberstalked as opposed to traditionally stalked decreased the odds of

reporting to police by 41.67%.

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Table 15. Logistic Regression Model of Likelihood of Reporting to Police among Victims of Stalking, N = 1,166

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables	Logit
Likelihood of reporting to police	Level of mental distress	0.130
		(0.050)**
	Female	0.244
		(0.159)
	Black	0.372
		(0.222)
	Race "other"	0.264
		(0.300)
	Married	0.193
		(0.187)
	Widowed	0.607
		(0.401)
	Divorced/Separated	0.114
		(0.199)
	At least some college education	-0.449
		(0.141)**
	Age in years	-0.002
		(0.006)
	Cyberstalking	-0.539
		(0.232)*
	Both mediums of stalking	0.212
		(0.254)
	Neither mediums of stalking	-0.028
		(0.169)
	Perceiving behavior as stalking	0.650
		(0.144)**
	Physical Violence	1.030
		(0.168)**
	Partner or ex-partner	0.139
		(0.254)
	Friend	-0.553
		(0.326)
	Acquaintance	-0.211
		(0.245)
	Non-partner relative	0.180
		(0.306)
	Other non-relative	0.536
		(0.274)
	Unable to identify offender	-0.578
		(0.442)
	Constant	-1.498
		(0.388)**
N - Observations		1,166

Table 15. (Continued)	
Chi2	164.36
Pseudo R2	0.11

To examine the relationship between the level of mental distress and the number of changes in routine activities reported by the victim (H2), Model 7 ran a negative binomial regression model. The negative binomial model was used over the Poisson model because the assumption of equidispersion was not met. Overall, Model 7 significantly predicted the expected number of changes in routine activities (likelihood-ratio test = 361.81, p-value <0.05). As indicated by Table 16, the model found that a one-unit change in the number of negative emotions reported by victims significantly increased the expected number of changes in routine activities by 17.34%, holding other variables constant. The effect of the control variables on the changes in routine activities reported by victims were substantively similar to Model 4.

Table 16. Negative Binomial Regression Model of Changes in Routine Activities among Victims of Stalking, N = 1,166

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables	Negative Binomial
Number of changes in routine activities	Level of mental distress	0.160
		(0.029)**
	Female	0.351
		(0.110)**
	Black	0.067
		(0.150)
	Race "other"	0.061
		(0.196)
	Married	0.148
		(0.124)
	Widowed	0.034
		(0.320)
	Divorced/Separated	0.277
		(0.126)*
	At least some college education	0.256
		(0.096)**
	Age in years	-0.017
		(0.004)**
	Cyberstalking	-0.022
		(0.137)

Table 16. (Continued)

	Both mediums of stalking	0.425
		(0.144)**
	Neither mediums of stalking	-0.238
		(0.113)*
	Perceiving behavior as stalking	0.438
		(0.095)**
	Physical Violence	0.703
		(0.101)**
	Partner or ex-partner	1.379
		(0.217)**
	Friend	1.106
		(0.248)**
	Acquaintance	0.922
		(0.219)**
	Non-partner relative	1.059
		(0.253)**
	Other non-relative	0.920
		(0.240)**
	Unable to identify offender	-1.009
		(0.626)
	Constant	-1.929
		(0.301)**
	lnalpha	-0.335
		(0.141)*
N - Observations		1,166
Chi2		361.81
Pseudo R2		0.12

* p<0.05; ** p<0.01

Lastly, Model 8 tested the relationship between level of mental distress and engaging in target hardening behaviors (H2). Similar to Models 4, 5 and 7, a negative binomial model was used to account for the overdispersion present in the sample. The negative binomial model indicated that the model significantly predicted the expected number of target hardening behaviors reported by the victim (likelihood-ratio test = 215.87, p-value < 0.05). Specifically, as shown in Table 17, Model 8 found that a one-unit change in the number of negative emotions reported by the victim did not significantly increase the expected number of target hardening behaviors, holding other variables constant. The effects of the control variables were substantively similar to those found in Model 5, with the addition of victim-offender

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relationship. Specifically, the model found that when the offender was a partner or ex-partner as opposed to a stranger the expected number of target hardening behaviors engaged by a victim increased by 54.15%. Overall Models 6 and 7 support H2, which predicted that the victim's level of mental distress would increase both the likelihood of reporting to police and engaging in self-protective measures, when operationalized as changes in routine activities. However, Model 8 did not support H2, which further predicted that the victim's level of mental distress would increase the likelihood of engaging in target hardening behaviors.

Table 17. Negative Binomial Regression Model of Target Hardening Behaviors among Victims of Stalking, N = 1,166

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables	Negative Binomial
Engaging in target hardening behaviors	Level of mental distress	0.055
		(0.032)
	Female	0.481
		(0.123)**
	Black	0.052
		(0.162)
	Race "other"	0.098
		(0.206)
	Married	0.404
		(0.132)**
	Widowed	0.331
		(0.329)
	Divorced/Separated	0.289
		(0.140)*
	At least some college education	0.290
		(0.104)**
	Age in years	-0.012
		(0.005)**
	Cyberstalking	-0.036
		(0.146)
	Both mediums of stalking	0.334
		(0.152)*
	Neither mediums of stalking	-0.444
		(0.124)**
	Perceiving behavior as stalking	0.483
		(0.103)**
	Physical Violence	0.430
		(0.113)**

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Table 17. (Continued)

	Partner or ex-partner	0.433
		(0.186)*
	Friend	0.190
		(0.228)
	Acquaintance	-0.226
		(0.192)
	Non-partner relative	0.105
		(0.230)
	Other non-relative	0.184
		(0.207)
	Unable to identify offender	-1.414
		(0.538)**
	Constant	-1.435
		(0.290)**
	lnalpha	-0.565
		(0.212)**
N - Observations		1,166
Chi2		215.87
Pseudo R2		0.09

* p<0.05; ** p<0.01

CHAPTER VI: DISCUSSION

The results of the current study add to the literature on stalking that examines victim decision-making. This study advances the scientific understanding of the individual and situational factors that influence whether victims of stalking will report their victimization to police and engage in self-protective measures. Using the NCVS-SVS the current study examines whether the victim's perception of the offender's motivation and level of mental distress has an effect on the likelihood of reporting to police and engaging in self-protective measures (e.g. changes in routine activities and engaging in target hardening behaviors). Evidence presented here suggests the importance of considering perceived motivation and mental distress when examining decision-making among victims of stalking.

To elaborate, the analyses found that the victim's perception of the motivation for the stalking is related to both the presence and the level of mental distress reported by the victim (Model 1 and 2). Specifically, victims who perceive the offender to be motivated by delusion have significantly higher odds of reporting the presence of mental distress than victims who perceive the offender to be motivated by control or attention. On the other hand, all four types of motivations are found to significantly increase the level of mental distress reported by victims. Future researchers should expand on these measures to include other motivations identified by the literature on stalking typologies, as well as operationalize these measures using mutually exclusive categories to examine the effects of motivations independently from other motivations.

The analyses further suggest that both perceived motivations and mental distress affect the likelihood of reporting to police. Model 3 suggests that victims who perceive the offender to

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be motivated by attention are significantly less likely to report to police compared to other perceived motivations. On the other hand, victims who perceive the offender to be motivated by delusion (e.g. alcohol/drugs and mental illness) are more likely to report to police, even after controlling for physical violence. A plausible explanation for these findings is that different perceptions of the offender's motivations may produce different levels of fear, which can subsequently affect the level of mental distress experienced by the victim (Reyns & Englebrecht, 2010). For example, it may be that perceiving the offender to be motivated by attention does not produce enough fear to garner high levels of mental distress compared to victims who perceive the offender to be motivated by delusion. Perhaps victims who perceive the offender to be motivated by delusion have a heighten fear that the offender will engage in physical violence, which would subsequently increase their level of mental distress and likelihood of reporting to police. Such explanation is plausible considering Model 6 finds support that high levels of mental distress increase the odds of reporting to police. Reyns and Englebrecht (2014) have found that victims of stalking who are frightened are more likely to engage in both informal and formal help-seeking decisions, including reporting to law enforcement, than victims who do not experience fear. Future researchers should thus examine the relationship between perceptions of motivation and the level of fear reported by the victim, to further the understanding of the mechanisms that lead to formal help-seeking decisions.

    The analyses of the study also suggest mix support on whether perceived motivations and mental distress affect the likelihood of engaging in self-protective measures. Specifically, Model 4 indicates that only perceiving the offender to be motivated by delusion will influence the expected number of changes in routine activities. Although the data does not allow for a thorough examination of the reason(s) behind this finding, one possible explanation is that

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delusional stalkers often engage in long-term offending through the use of close-range and confrontational attacks, which may propel victims to change their daily routines to minimize their exposure to the offender (Wright et al., 1996). Future researchers should thus examine the length of victimization in conjunction with frequency of offending as they relate to specific stalking typologies and subsequently examine their effects on the likelihood of engaging in self-protective measures. Consistent with the literature, Model 7 further suggests that the higher the level of mental distress reported by the victim the higher the expected changes in routines activities (Mustaine & Tewksbury, 1999).

Alternatively, the analysis for Model 5 suggests that *both* perceived stalking motivated by control and delusion are significant predictors that the victim will engage in target hardening behaviors. However, inconsistent with expectations, the level of mental distress did not significantly affect the likelihood of engaging in target hardening behaviors after controlling for other variables. One possible explanation for this finding is prior victimization. As discussed in Chapter 2, victims of stalking are commonly stalked by a partner or ex-partner who may have engaged in intimate partner violence during the course of the relationship. Target hardening behaviors, such as installing security devices, may have been used by the victim as a form of self-protection; However, the literature has found that some forms of target hardening behaviors can actually increase the likelihood and severity of violence (Messing et al., 2017). This prior experience may lead victims to associate target hardening behaviors as unhelpful, and therefore, unlikely to utilize them during the present stalking victimization despite high levels of mental distress. Future researchers should examine these possible connections. Another possible explanation is the temporal order of the decision-making process. Perhaps, victims of stalking are more likely to initially respond to their victimization by changing their routine activities, and

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when those changes are not effective, they may resort to contacting the police. Engaging in target hardening behaviors may occur only after contacting the police, in which case the level of mental distress may have already reached a threshold. That threshold would indicate that any additional mental distress will not significantly increase the expected number of target hardening behaviors engaged by the victim. Future researchers should thus utilize longitudinal and panel studies to examine the sequential order of these events.

The analyses also indicate the importance of considering the medium of stalking and the victim's perception of the behaviors as stalking when examining victim decision-making. Specifically, Models 7 and 8 suggest that when the victim experienced both traditional and cyberstalking, they were more likely to engage in changes in routine activities and target gardening behaviors than if they were only traditionally stalked. While the literature on stalking has examined the similarities and differences among both mediums, future researchers should examine whether the measures examined in the present study are stronger for victims of traditional stalking, victims of cyberstalking, or victims of both forms of stalking. Furthermore, the analyses suggest that victims who perceive the behaviors to be stalking are more likely to report to the police and engage in self-protective measures than victims who do not perceive such behaviors to be stalking. Future researchers should thus aim to identify the threshold where victims go from perceiving behaviors to be harmless to perceiving the behaviors to be stalking. Specifically, researchers should examine what level of stalking (e.g., number of offenses, severity of offenses, length of offending, etc.) triggers the level of fear and mental distress needed for a victim to want to report to the police and/or engage in self-protective measures. Additionally, future researchers should examine the salience of the definition of stalking across demographics for perceived motivations.

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Lastly, 7 out of the 8 Models found that being a woman as opposed to a man increased the presence and level of mental distress, and the likelihood of reporting to police and/or engaging in self-protective measures. Prior studies have found that the mental health impact of stalking victimization is similar for men and women, and that the differences observed in other studies, including the current study, result from the mechanisms through which they occur (Davis, Coker, & Sanderson, 2002). Kuehner and colleagues (2012) found evidence that stalking victimization mediated the relationship between gender and mental illness, indicating that stalking "can be regarded as a behavior that is related to male and female gender roles" (Kuehner et al., 2012). However, other researchers have attributed the gender differences to the disproportionate number of negative effects experienced by women compared to men, including IPV, fear and posttraumatic stress (Caldwell, Swan, & Woodbrown, 2011). As discussed earlier, the level of fear can be an underlying mechanism affecting the likelihood of reporting and engaging in self-protective measures, and the literature has found that women report being more fearful than men (Fox, Nobles, & Piquero, 2009). Future researchers should thus examine gender invariance to determine whether the measures examined in the present study are stronger for women compared to men.

Limitations and Future Research

While the present study adds to the victim decision-making literature, the results of the present study are not without limitations. First, despite the NCVS being one of the most reliable sources of national data on criminal victimization, the relatively large number of victims who were ineligible to complete the SVS because they did not meet the criteria for stalking, as set by the NCVS, suggests that results should be generalized with caution. Future researchers should thus ensure the use of larger samples that include respondents who have experienced stalking

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victimization in the past, and not just those who have recently experienced it. Second, the NCVS is a self-report questionnaire, which means underreporting by respondents is a possibility, further limiting the interpretations of the results.

In addition to the limitations mentioned above, the NCVS-SVS had some limitations in regard to the survey items. The items addressing the perceived motivation for the offending were not designed to capture the typologies of stalking identified by the literature. For example, alcohol and/or drug abuse and mental illness had to serve as proxies for stalking motivated by delusion; However, missing are items that address the offender's level of obsession and fixation with the victim, and the offender's need to have the victim acknowledge the imaginary relationship. Although items characteristic of domestic and delusional stalkers was captured in the study, other typologies of stalking were not examined, including the nuisance stalker, the intimacy-seeker, the incompetent, the rejected and the predator (Melton, 2000; Mullen et al., 1999; Roberts et al., 1996; Wright et al., 1996). Thus, future researchers should include items that capture these different typologies in order to further the understanding of how different perceptions of motivation can influence mental distress, likelihood of reporting, and engaging in self-protective measures.

Another limitation of the study is the missing data found for certain measures. For example, a category of "neither" had to be created to capture the respondents who did not know whether they were cyberstalked, and/or who were not eligible to answer the traditional stalking items. The SVS only asked respondents the traditional stalking items if they had been aware of those behaviors for at least one year. Meaning, that valuable information on stalking-like behaviors were not asked to victims experiencing stalking for less than a year, leading to missing data for the measure of "traditional" stalking. Additionally, future researchers should examine

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whether not knowing whether the offender is engaging in behaviors indicative of cyberstalking affects mental distress, which could then affect the likelihood of reporting and engaging in self-protective measures. Furthermore, the SVS questionnaire was not designed to include technology or social media as indicators of cyberstalking, which serves as a major limitation given that social media is a major outlet for which offenders conduct their stalking today. Therefore, based on the limitations above, the findings surrounding the measure of medium should be interpreted with some caution.

Perhaps, the above limitations can be explained by the data being collected in 2006. Stalking has changed significantly in the past 14 years. Recent studies conducted in various countries have continuously found a significant increase in the prevalence of stalking victimization. Thus, suggesting that if the SVS was administered today, the number of eligible respondents to complete the questionnaire would exceed 1,686, the current sample size. Furthermore, technology has greatly improved since 2006, with social media and dating applications providing offenders with additional outlets in which to engage in a wider range of cyberstalking behaviors. Applications, such as Snapchat and Tinder, allow the participant's location to be shared with other users, furthering increasing the exposure of participants to potential offenders. Therefore, future researchers should build upon the SVS questionnaire to include up-to-date cyberstalking indicators, as well as a list of self-protective behaviors specific to cyberstalking victimization (Nobles et al., 2014). Despite these limitations, this present study offers valuable insights into the factors that influence a victim's decision to report to police and engage in self-protective measures.

Practical Implications

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Findings from the current study have a number of policy implications. First, the victim's perceptions of the offender's motivation for engaging in stalking-like behaviors matter when understanding whether victims will report to police and/or engage in self-protective measures. Such findings have implications for policy and programming which seek to educate the public on stalking victimization. Policies and programs must take into consideration not only the motives of the offender, but also the victim's perceptions of those motives, which may in turn increase their level of mental distress. Furthermore, such policies and programs should promote reporting to police without increasing fear, especially among victim's who perceive the offender to be motivated by delusion. One possible way of conveying the importance of reporting without eliciting fear is by educating the public at an early age to recognize the signs of stalking before the stalking escalates to the point of fear-inducing. Through early intervention, victims of stalking will be able to associate reporting as a mechanism through which they will be able to minimize their level of mental distress that could worsen if left unreported.

Next, the present study's analysis indicates that other factors, specific to the victim, may also influence whether the victim will report to police and engage in self-protective measures, including gender, education, age, and marital status, highlighting vulnerable populations with regard to stalking. Research has found that young college women are among the most vulnerable populations for stalking victimization, yet the current study finds that young college-educated victims are among the least likely to report to police and young victims are among the least likely to engage in self-protective measures (Bjorklund, Hakkanen-Nyholm, Sheridan, & Roberts, 2010; McNamara & Marsil, 2012; NCVS, 2009; Office of Justice Programs, 2018; Reyns, Henson, & Fisher, 2010). This suggests that those most vulnerable to stalking may also be the least likely to seek help and engage in behaviors that will reduce the frequency and

severity of their victimization; findings that align with prior research (Reyns & Englebrecht, 2014). Again, creating policies and programs that aim to educate the public about stalking is essential if it is wished to reduce the psychological, emotional, and physical consequences associated with this crime.

Lastly, the analyses indicate that situational factors may also influence whether the victim will report to police and engage in self-protective measures, including medium of stalking, perception of behavior as stalking, presence of physical violence, and victim-offender relationship. The present study finds that victims who experience both mediums of stalking are more likely to engage in self-protective measures than victims who only experience traditional stalking. With the increase in technology use, it is logically inferred that victims experiencing traditional stalking today will inevitably be cyberstalked as well. Yet despite these findings, as argued by Nobles and colleagues (2014), cyberstalking is not specifically mentioned in stalking legislation. As suggested by the findings in Model 6, this exclusion may then discourage victims from reporting their victimization to police. Furthermore, as discussed earlier, the analyses suggest that victims who perceive the behaviors to be stalking are more likely to report to police and engage in self-protective measures than victims who do not acknowledge their experiences as criminal acts. As mentioned in Chapter 2, misconstrued attitudes and definitional misperceptions of stalking can lead to severe consequences for victims. Specifically, the inability to identify as a victim of a stalking means the victim will not engage in behaviors that could minimize their exposure and accessibility to the offender. Thus, policies should focus on educating the public on what constitutes stalking.

Additionally, the analysis shows that the presence of physical violence is the strongest predictor of whether the victim will report their victimization to police and/or engage in self-

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protective measures. In conjunction with these findings are the results that suggest that a victim's offender is more likely to be a partner or ex-partner (IPV) or acquaintance than a stranger. As discussed in Chapter 2, domestic stalkers, which tend to be the victim's partner or ex-partner, are more likely to engage in violence compared to other forms of stalkers (McEwan et al., 2009; Mullen et al., 1999). Thus, suggesting the possibility that victims who have a prior relationship with the offender are at a heighten risk for physical violence compared to victim's whose offender is a stranger. Although future research is needed to explore this possible connection, such findings do indicate that efforts must be made to educate the public on how to recognize red flags within relationships that can be predictive of future stalking, especially upon the termination of the relationship.

Conclusion

The major conclusion to arise for the present study is that when examining the victim's likelihood of reporting stalking victimization to police and their willingness to engage in self-protective measures, the victim's perception of the offender's motivation must be taken into consideration. This avenue of research reinforces the idea that policy makers, law enforcement officials, informal social networks, and victims alike need to account for multiple predictors in order for any guided efforts to ameliorate the consequences associated with stalking victimization to be effective. Future researchers should thus focus on expanding the present study to include the perceived motivations for offending based on the typologies of stalking, not examined in this study, in order to examine their effects on the likelihood of reporting and engaging in self-protective measures.

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APPENDIX A: SELF-PROTECTIVE MEASURES

Table 18. Descriptive Statistics of Self-Protective Measures among Stalking Victims (N=1,686)

	N	%
Changes in Routine Activities		
Took time off from work or school	180	10.68%
Changed or quit a job or school	109	6.47%
Changed the way they went to work or school	150	8.90%
Avoided relatives, friends, or holiday celebrations	174	10.32%
Changed their usual activities outside of work/school	240	14.23%
Stayed with friends/relatives or had them stay with them	191	11.33%
Altered their appearance to be unrecognizable	27	1.60%
Took self-defense or martial arts classes	15	0.90%
Had to move residence	148	8.78%
Target Hardening		
Changed social security number	4	0.24%
Changed email address	100	5.93%
Changed telephone numbers	204	12.10%
Installed caller id or call blocking systems	230	13.64%
Changed or installed new locks or a security system	151	8.96%
Obtained a weapon (pepper spray/gun/other)	131	7.77%

APPENDIX B: PERCEIVED MOTIVATIONS MEASURES

Table 19. Descriptive Statistics of Perceived Motivation among Stalking Victims (N=1,686)

	N	%
Stalking Motivated by Control		
For retaliation, scare-tactic, perpetrator was angry, out of spite	485	29.85%
To catch victim doing something	56	3.45%
To control the victim (perpetrator was jealous, possessive, or insecure)	402	24.74%
To keep victim in the relationship and/or from leaving	201	12.37%
Stalking Motivated by Delusion		
Perpetrator was an alcoholic or drug abuser	172	10.58%
Perpetrator was mentally ill or emotionally unstable	276	16.98%
Stalking Motivated by Attention		
Perpetrator thought the victim liked the attention	41	2.52%
Perpetrator like the attention	125	7.69%
Perpetrator liked or had a crush on the victim -thought they were attractive	210	12.92%
Stalking Motivated by Other		
Perpetrator had different cultural belief or background	52	3.20%
Proximity, convenience, or because victim was alone	83	5.11%
Other	399	24.55%

Note. Percentages reflect valid cases (n=1,625).

APPENDIX C: MENTAL DISTRESS MEASURES

Table 20. Descriptive Statistics of Self-Protective Measures among Stalking Victims (N=1,686)

	N	%
Mental Distress at Onset		
Anxious, concerned, uncomfortable, worried, on edge, troubled, and/or nervous	684	40.57%
Annoyed, angry, bothered, mad, upset, furious and/or aggravated	1,158	68.68%
Frightened, scared, threatened, afraid, alarmed, panicked, paranoid, and/or terrified	442	26.21%
Depressed, hopeless and/or sad	173	10.32%
Helpless, powerless, and/or frustrated	254	15.07%
Sick, physically ill, and/or stressed	166	9.85%
Suicidal, suicidal thoughts, and/or suicide attempts	15	0.90%
Other	153	9.07%

Note. Percentages reflect valid cases (n=1,605).

APPENDIX D: MEDIUM OF STALKING MEASURES

Table 21. Descriptive Statistics for Medium of Stalking among Stalking Victims (N=1,686)

	N	%
Medium of Stalking		
Traditional Stalking		
Received unwanted phone calls or messages	389	23.07%
Received unwanted letters, e-mails, or other written forms of communication	219	13.00%
Been followed or spied on	169	10.02%
Had perpetrator wait outside or inside places for them, such as home, school, workplace, etc.	134	7.95%
Had perpetrator show up at places where they were even though they had no business being there.	147	8.72%
Received unwanted items, presents, or flowers	52	3.08%
Had perpetrator post information or spread rumors about them	206	12.23%
Cyberstalking		
Used e-mail to harass or threaten the victim	292	17.32%
Used instant messenger to harass or threaten the victim	91	5.40%
Used chat rooms to harass or threaten the victim	14	0.83%
Used blogs, message, or bulletin boards to harass or threaten the victim	40	2.37%
Used other internet sites	29	1.72%
Used video or digital cameras to track the behavior of the victim	37	2.19%
Used computer programs, such as spyware, to track the behavior of the victim	42	2.49%
Used electronic listening device or bugs to track the behavior of the victim	35	2.08%
Used global positioning system to track the behavior of the victim	8	0.47%
Both	161	9.54%
Do not know	229	17.36%

Note. Participants could report in more than one item, which is why percentages add up to more than 100%.

Table 22. Descriptive Statistics of Physical Violence among the Sample (N=1,686)

	N	%
Physical Violence		
Perpetrator attacked or attempted to attack victim's child	37	2.19%
Perpetrator attacked or attempted to attack victim's family member	60	3.56%
Perpetrator attacked or attempted to attack victim's friend or co-worker	52	3.08%
Perpetrator attacked or attempted to attack victim's pet	37	2.19%
Perpetrator attacked or attempted to attack victim by hitting, slapping, or knocking them down	110	6.52%
Perpetrator attacked or attempted to attack victim by chocking or strangling	35	2.08%
Perpetrator attacked or attempted to attack victim by rape or sexual assault	14	0.83%
Perpetrator attacked or attempted to attack victim with a weapon	36	2.14%
Perpetrator attacked or attempted to attack victim by chasing or dragging them with a car	31	1.84%
Perpetrator attacked or attempted to attack victim using another way	76	4.51%

Note. Percentages reflect valid cases (N=1,591).

APPENDIX F: MISSING DATA INFORMATION

Table 23. Missing Data

	Number of Cases Missing	Percentage Missing
Perceived Motivation	61	3.62%
Mental Distress		
At onset	81	4.80%
Medium of Stalking	166	9.85%
Victim-Offender Relationship	370	21.95%
Physical Violence	95	5.63%