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University of Nottingham

Assessed Coursework Cover Sheet for Applied Psychology Postgraduate Courses

Module Title: Forensic Psychology Research Dissertation

Coursework Title: Perceptions of Stalking: A Comparison of the Prior-Relationship Misconception and Perceptions of Threat for Transgender and Cisgender Perpetrators.

Word Count (excluding references and appendices):

Chapter	Word Count
Research Proposal	1852
Research Paper (excluding Table 1 but including abstract)	5949
Executive Summary	957
PowerPoint Presentation	412
Reflective Report	1934

This is to confirm that I submit this piece of assessed work in the full knowledge of the published guidelines on plagiarism and its consequences

Type name: Lydia Cook

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Research Proposal

Perceptions of Stalking and Intrusive Behaviours: How contextual information about gender identification and prior relationship can alter impressions of stalking and intrusive behaviours.

Author: Lydia Caroline Cook

Student ID: 20199748

Supervisor: Dr. Simon Duff

Module: Forensic Research Project

Area of Interest

1.1 Stalking Misconceptions

As stalking is a relatively new crime, it has been shown that public perceptions of stalking and stalker-like behaviours often misrepresent the reality (Sheridan, Gillett, Davies, Blaauw, & Patel, 2003). Specifically, there seem to be misconceptions around what types of people are likely to become violent, and therefore pose the biggest threat to their victim. Statistically in the UK, ex-partner stalkers are much more likely to pose a violent threat to their victim in comparison to stranger stalkers, especially when domestic violence occurred in the relationship (Monckton-Smith, Szymanska & Haile, 2017). However, participants are more likely to believe that behaviour constituted stalking, caused mental or physical harm, and required police intervention, when it came from a stranger compared to an ex-partner (Scott, Lloyd & Gavin 2010). Conduct severity and perpetrator-target relationship has been shown to influence perceptions, with stalking behaviours being viewed as more alarming and distressing when the perpetrator was a stranger (Scott & Sheridan, 2011). In courtroom decisions, stranger stalkers have actually been found to be significantly more likely to be convicted of staking-related offences (Sheridan & Davies, 2001).

1.2 Gender Stereotypes around Stalking and Violence

Research has found that males and females perpetrate comparable rates of stalking (Thomas, Purcell, Pathe & Mullen, 2008), however male victims are less likely to report being a victim (Meloy & Boyd, 2003). Male and female stalkers tend to perpetrate equal incidences of severe violence (Thompson, Dennison & Stewart, 2012). There are, however, established gender differences in stalking perpetration. Males often stalk to restore intimacy, whilst females stalk to establish intimacy (Meloy et al., 2003). In juveniles, females tend to stalk in retaliation to bullying and harassment, whereas males stalked following rejection or relationship breakdown (Thomas et al., 2003). Yet, public perceptions of stalking tend to rely on gender stereotypes that are not reflective of these findings. Male stalkers are stereotypically viewed as being more violent and more likely to induce bodily harm (Sheridan et al., 2003). Female stalkers are judged as being less threatening and less in need of police intervention

(Sheridan et al., 2003), despite their equal risk of violence (Thompson et al., 2012).

1.3 Stalking in the Transgender Population

Tentative estimates around the number of transgender people living in the UK are between 200,000 and 500,000, with almost 5,000 people legally changing their gender in the last year (Government Equalities Office, 2018). Transgender populations have been studied in relation to stalking, but only with focus on victims and rates of victimisation. However, transgender perpetrators of stalking are virtually unexplored in forensic research, and there is currently no research into public perceptions of these perpetrators. Although there are no specific statistics on the number of convicted transgender stalkers, there is evidence that the number of incarcerated transgender individuals is rising. Since 2016, the number of UK prisons holding transgender inmates has risen from 33 to 44, with 139 transgender people currently being imprisoned in the UK (Government Equalities Office, 2018). It is likely that the number of transgender people convicted of stalking will begin to rise and become more common, and so it is important to identify any perceptions or biases that may influence jury decisions around intrusive behaviours or threat within these populations.

1.4 Threat from Transgender Populations

Public perceptions of transgender people have been explored in areas unrelated to stalking. Heterosexual men have been reported to view transgender individuals as a threat to traditional gender and heterosexist values (Nagoshi, Adams, Terrell, Hill, Brzuzy, & Nagoshi, 2008), and find the concept of being attracted to a transgender woman, a threat to their sexuality (Gazzola & Morrison, 2014). Norton and Herek (2013) reported that endorsement of a binary concept of gender, higher levels of psychological authoritarianism and anti-egalitarianism were predictors of prejudiced perceptions of transgender people. Prusaczyk and Hodson (2019) further refined these findings, concluding that those more conservative in their ideologies were threatened by gender non-conformists because of their beliefs around binary genders. Additional research has also identified right-wing authoritarianism and anti-egalitarianism as causes of bias in perceptions of transgender people, alongside social factors such as strong in-group identity and contact anxiety (McCullough, Dispenza, Chang &

Zeligman, 2019). From these findings, it is reasonable to infer that some people may view transgender stalkers as more threatening than their cis counterparts, because of their own prejudices towards that particular social group.

1.5 Gender Stereotypes

Since transgender perpetrators of stalking are virtually unexplored, it is currently unknown whether people may associate these perpetrators with stereotypes related to their birth gender. Callahan and Zukowski (2019) asked participants to indicate what restroom they would want a transgender individual to use, and results indicated a preference for transgender people to use the restroom corresponding to their birth gender, rather than chosen identity. Within sporting contexts, transgender females are often subject to hostility for wanting to represent their chosen, as opposed to birth gender (Atteberry-Ash, Woodford & Centre, 2018), despite their being no consistent or direct research to say that transgender females have any athletic advantage during any stage of their transition (Jones, Arcelus, Bouman & Haycraft, 2017). In the context of stalking, it could be that transgender females are viewed as more violent or threatening perpetrators, due to the gender stereotypes around their male birth-gender.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

On the basis of the research cited above, the aim of the present study is to investigate whether public perceptions of stalking perpetrators differ when the perpetrator is transgender, compared to if the perpetrator is cisgender. In addition, there will be an investigation into whether the pattern of stranger stalkers being perceived as more threatening than ex-partners will still exist in transgender communities. The following three hypotheses are proposed;

(1) For both transgender and cisgender perpetrators, the stranger stalkers will be perceived as more threatening and likely to be violent, compared to the ex-partner stalker.
(2) Transgender female perpetrators will be perceived as more threatening and likely to be violent, compared to transgender male participants.
(3) On the whole, transgender perpetrators will be perceived as more threatening than cisgender perpetrators.

Method

2.1 Proposed Participants

The proposed participants will be people who are eligible for jury duty, as this would be more realistic for the practical applications of the study (i.e. transgender stalkers receiving more 'guilty' convictions'. They will be asked questions prior to beginning the study, such as are you between 18 and 70, registered to vote, and a registered citizen of the UK etc. If they do not meet any of these criteria, then a window will pop up explaining this, and their study will be terminated. Assuming 0.05 statistical significance, 0.8 power, and a medium effect size (on basis of Duff & Scott, 2013), an a-priori power calculation determined that a sample of 128 was needed.

2.2 Design

Participants will be assigned randomly to one of the following conditions;

1. Male stalking female (ex-partner)
2. Male stalking female (stranger)
3. Transgender female (born male) stalking female (ex-partner)
4. Transgender female (born male) stalking female (stranger)
5. Trans male (born female) stalking female (ex-partner)
6. Trans male (born female) stalking female (stranger)

2.3 Materials

Participants will complete a short questionnaire, comprising of one vignette, four scale items and three demographic questions (relating to gender, age and nationality). Prior to beginning the questionnaire, participants will read two contextual sentences about the two people who feature in the vignettes. The sentence about the victim, 'Lucy', is identical in all conditions;

Lucy is a 24 year old women, with no history of mental health issues, nor any criminal convictions.

The contextual sentences for the perpetrators will also state their age (25), and that they have no previous history of mental health issues, nor any criminal convictions. The only difference will be that, for the transgender perpetrators, there will be a brief reference to their transition;

> *Jade is a 25 year old transgender female. She was born male, however has since fully transitioned to a woman. Jade has no previous history of mental health illness, nor does she have any previous criminal convictions*

The vignettes in all ex-partner conditions are all identical, apart from the perpetrator's name will change from Josh (male perpetrator and transgender male perpetrator) to Jade (transgender female perpetrator). The vignette will read;

> *Lucy and Josh met in a bar, and went on to date happily for around eight months. However, towards the end of the relationship, Lucy began to feel unhappy in the relationship, and decided to end it. This was around two weeks ago. Since then, Josh has been calling Lucy both at work and home, sometimes up to three times a day, despite Lucy not calling back. Josh sent Lucy some chocolates and a card, expressing his desire to get back together. Lucy has seen Josh a couple of times when she have been out about near her house, and on one of these occasions Josh did approach her and asked if they could talk through their issues. One evening whilst cooking in her kitchen, Lucy thought she saw Josh standing near her garden, however she could not be sure*

.

The vignette in the stranger condition will describe the exact same set of behaviours. The only differences will be again, the name, depending on the gender of the perpetrator, and the initial sentence describing how they met. The opening sentence in the stranger condition will read;

> *Lucy and Josh met in a bar two weeks ago, and after a brief conversation, exchanged numbers. At the end of the night, Josh asked Lucy on a date, but Lucy decided to decline as she wasn't looking for a relationship at that time.*

All participants will then respond to the following four statements regarding the behaviour of the perpetrator (again, the name of the perpetrator would be 'Jade' in the transgender female conditions);

(1) Josh's behaviour constitutes stalking.
(2) Josh poses a threat to Lucy.
(3) Josh is likely to be violent towards Lucy.
(4) Josh's behaviour requires police intervention and possibly criminal charges.

These statements will be responded to on a Likert-type Scale, using one of the following response options; 'Strongly Agree', 'Agree', 'Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree'.

2.4 Data Collection

The study will be advertised, distributed and completed online. Advertisement will take place on social media sites, namely Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. It will be advertised on as a 'short research study focused on perceptions of stalking'. The study will be created and completed using JISC online software. The aim is to have all data collected by May.

2.5 Proposed Analysis

Hypotheses (1) and (2) will be answered using Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA), as these hypotheses include two dependant variables (ratings of 'threat', and ratings of 'likelihood of violence'). Hypothesis (3) will be answered using a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), as there is only one dependant variable ('ratings of threat'). These analyses will be run on SPSS.

Ethics Application Form

Application for approval of all studies involving **Healthy Human Participants only conducted by Staff and Students of the University of Nottingham which don't involve an invasive procedure**

1 Title of Project: Perceptions of Stalking: How contextual information about gender identification and prior relationship can alter impressions of stalking and intrusive behaviours.

Short title: Perceptions of Stalking.

2 Names, Qualifications, Job Title, School/Divisional/Unit/Address, email of all Researchers:

Chief Academic/Supervisor: Dr. Simon Duff (90%)

Students name and course: Lydia Caroline Cook

MSc Forensic and Criminal Psychology (by research).

3 Type of Project: Between-participants survey.

4 Location of study: Online.

5 Description and number of participants to be studied: The proposed participants will be people who are eligible for jury duty. They will be asked questions prior to beginning the study, such as are you between 18 and 70, registered to vote, and a registered citizen of the UK etc. If they do not meet any of these criteria, then a window will pop up explaining this, and their study will be terminated. Assuming 0.05 statistical significance, 0.8 power, and a medium effect size (on basis of Duff & Scott, 2013), an a-priori power calculation determined that a sample of 128 was needed.

Summary of Experimental Protocol

Background

Ex-partner stalkers are much more likely to pose a violent threat to their victim in comparison to stranger stalkers, especially when domestic violence occurred in the relationship (Monckton-Smith, Szymanska & Haile, 2017). However, participants are more likely to believe that behaviour constituted stalking, caused mental or physical

harm, and required police intervention, when it came from a stranger compared to an ex-partner (Scott, Lloyd & Gavin 2010). Males and females perpetrate comparable rates of stalking (Thomas, Purcell, Pathé & Mullen, 2008), and severe violence (Thompson, Dennison & Stewart, 2012). Yet, male stalkers are viewed as being more violent and more likely to induce bodily harm (Sheridan et al., 2003).

Transgender perpetrators of stalking are virtually unexplored in forensic research, and there is currently no research into public perceptions of these perpetrators. There is evidence that the number of incarcerated transgender individuals is rising. Since 2016, the number of UK prisons holding transgender inmates has risen from 33 to 44, with 139 transgender people currently being imprisoned in the UK (Government Equalities Office, 2018). It is likely that the number of transgender people convicted of stalking will begin to rise and become more common, and so it is important to identify any perceptions or biases that may influence jury decisions around intrusive behaviours or threat within these populations.

In the context of stalking, it could be that transgender females are viewed as more violent or threatening perpetrators, due to the gender stereotypes around their male birth-gender. Callahan and Zukowski (2019) asked participants to indicate what restroom they would want a transgender individual to use, and results indicated a preference for transgender people to use the restroom corresponding to their birth gender, rather than chosen identity. Within sporting contexts, transgender females are often subject to hostility for wanting to represent their chosen, as opposed to birth gender (Atteberry-Ash, Woodford & Centre, 2018), despite their being no consistent or direct research to say that transgender females have any athletic advantage during any stage of their transition (Jones, Arcelus, Bouman & Haycraft, 2017).

Aims and Hypotheses

The aim of the present study is to investigate whether public perceptions of stalking perpetrators differ when the perpetrator is transgender, compared to if the perpetrator is cisgender. In addition, there will be an investigation into whether the pattern of stranger stalkers being perceived as more threatening than ex-partners will still exist in transgender communities. The following three hypotheses are proposed;

(1) For both transgender and cisgender perpetrators, the stranger stalkers will be perceived as more threatening and likely to be violent, compared to the ex-partner stalker.

(2) Transgender female perpetrators will be perceived as more threatening and likely to be violent, compared to transgender male participants.

(3) On the whole, transgender perpetrators will be perceived as more threatening than cisgender perpetrators.

Methods and Measurable End Points

Participants will complete a short questionnaire, comprising of one vignette, four scale items and four demographic questions (relating to gender, age, nationality and religious identification). Stalking behaviours will be the same in all conditions, but the status (ex-partner or stranger) and gender (Trans or cis) of the perpetrator will change. Participants will then respond to the following four statements on a Likert Scale from 'Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree'

(1) Josh's behaviour constitutes stalking.
(2) Josh poses a threat to Lucy.
(3) Josh is likely to be violent towards Lucy.
(4) Josh's behaviour requires police intervention and possibly criminal charges.

Responses given will be analysed using an ANOVA, and will be run on SPSS.

7 Lay Summary of project. ***Summaries which include language which is too technical for lay members of the Committee will be rejected.***

Participants will read vignettes describing the behaviour of either a fictitious ex-partner or a fictitious stranger, who appears to be stalking a fictitious victim. The behaviours will remain the same in all conditions, however the identities of the perpetrators and victims will change so that the following conditions are formed;

1. Male stalking female (ex-partner)

2. Male stalking female (stranger)

3. Transgender female (born male) stalking female (ex-partner)

4. Transgender female (born male) stalking female (stranger)

5. Transgender male (born female) stalking female (ex-partner)

6. Transgender male (born female) stalking female (stranger).

Participants will then be asked to rate whether they think the behaviour constitutes as stalking, whether it is threatening, whether they think the perpetrator is likely to be violent and whether police intervention would be needed. The study has the following hypotheses;

(1) For both transgender and cisgender perpetrators, the stranger stalkers will be perceived as more threatening and likely to be violent, compared to the ex-partner stalker.

(2) Transgender female perpetrators will be perceived as more threatening and likely to be violent, compared to transgender male participants.

(3) On the whole, transgender perpetrators will be perceived as more threatening than cisgender perpetrators.

8 Will written consent be obtained from all volunteers? As the study is distributed online, written consent cannot be given. Participants will give informed consent.

9 Will an inconvenience allowance be offered? No.

10 FUNDING. No funding.

11 Studies involving NHS Staff, organisations, Services: Does the study involve any premises, services staff who hold a contract with a hospital, Primary Healthcare or Social Care Trust?

No, this study does not involve any NHS staff, organisations or services.

12. How will the subjects be chosen? The study will be distributed online, and subjects can choose whether they wish to take part. There will be an eligibility criterion – participants must meet the requirements of being eligible for jury duty (as this would be more realistic for practical applications). They will be asked questions prior to beginning the study, such as are you between 18 and 70, registered to vote, and a registered citizen of the UK etc. If they do not meet any of these criteria, then a window will pop up explaining this, and their study will be terminated.

13 Describe how possible participants will be approached. Participants will see the study being advertised online, and they can choose whether or not they wish to take part.

14 What sources of information will be included? i.e., pre-existing research database, student records, visits to other organisation, online resource. All the information used in this study will come from the participant responses. All the materials will be original sources that I have written myself. No pre-existing materials are being used.

15 Whose permission will be sought to access this information (e.g. GP, consultant Head of Organisation)? N/A

16 For interview/focus groups: N/A

17 Data Storage and Data management. Data will be accessed using a password-protected laptop using encryption while transferring and saving all data generated in the course of the research. All such data are kept on a password-protected databases sitting on restricted access computer system and would only be accessed by the research team. All data and records will be stored for a minimum of 7 years and then destroyed. The anonymous data collected may be shared to allow reuse by the research team and other third parties for the purposes of research in this area only.

18 What ethical problems do you foresee in this project? The only ethical issues I foresee in this project is that (for some people) stalking may be an emotional or sensitive issue that they do not want to think about. However, the fact that the study is focused on perceptions of stalking will be clearly stated in both the title and the information sheet (see Appendix A), so participants can choose not to take part in this study if they think reading materials about stalking will upset them. The debrief sheet (see Appendix C) will contain information about helplines and sources of support for those affected by these particular issues. It is possible that those in a condition with a transgender perpetrator may be upset that this minority group is being portrayed in a negative light. However, the debrief sheet will explain that the study compared perceptions across transgender and cis perpetrators, and will note that in other conditions there were non-trans perpetrators.

19 What are the possible limitations of the proposed design of this study? As this study is being distributed online, it is possible that participants may lie about meeting the eligibility criterion and continue with the study anyway. In addition, as the participants will not be in the room when completing the study, it will be hard to monitor their engagement and attention with the study.

DECLARATION: I will inform the Medical School Ethics Committee as soon as I hear the outcome of any application for funding for the proposed project and/or if there are any significant changes to this proposal. I have read the notes to the investigators and clearly understand my obligations as to the rights, welfare and dignity of the subjects to be studied, particularly with regard to the giving of information and the obtaining of consent.

Name and address for correspondence with applicant:

Lydia Cook
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Moira
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DE12 6DL.

References

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27 February 2020

Dr. Simon Duff
Director of Stage ll Forensic Training
Centre for Forensic & Family Psychology
Psychiatry and Applied Psychology
School of Medicine, University of Nottingham
B05, YANG Fujia Building, Jubilee Campus
Nottingham,
NG8 1BB

Dear Dr Duff

Ethics Reference No: 476-2001 – please always quote	
Study Title: Perceptions of Stalking: how contextual information around gender and sexual orientation can alter impressions of stalking and intrusive behaviours.	
Chief Investigator/ Supervisor: Dr. Simon Duff, Director of Stage ll Forensic Training, Centre for Forensic & Family Psychology, School of Medicine	
Lead Investigators/ student: Lydia Cook, MSc Forensic and Criminal Psychology, School of Medicine	
Other Key investigators: Dr. Vincent Egan Associate Professor, Year 1 Director of Forensic Psychology Programmes, Centre for Forensic & Family Psychology, School of Medicine	
Proposed Start Date: 01/03/2020	**Proposed End Date:** 31/05/2020

Thank you for submitting the above application and the following documents were received:

- FMHS REC Application form and supporting documents version 1.0: 15/01/2020

These have been reviewed and are satisfactory and the project has been given a favourable opinion.

A favourable opinion has been given on the understanding that:

1. The protocol agreed is followed and the Committee is informed of any changes using a notice of amendment form (please request a form).
2. The chair is informed of any serious or unexpected event.
3. An End of Project Progress Report is completed and returned when the study has finished (Please request a form).

Yours sincerely,



Dr John Williams, Associate Professor in Anaesthesia and Pain Medicine
Chair, Faculty of Medicine & Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee



Perceptions of Stalking: A Comparison of the Prior-Relationship Misconception and Perceptions of Threat for Transgender and Cisgender Perpetrators.

Lydia Cook – 20199748

Supervisor: Dr. Simon Duff

Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity

Research thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the

MSc (Hons) Forensic and Criminological Psychology.

University of Nottingham

School of Medicine

July 2020

Abstract

Stalking literature has identified prior-relationship and gender misconceptions that see stranger and male perpetrators perceived as more threatening than ex-partner or female perpetrators. These perceptions do not reflect the reality. The present study seeks to build on stalking misconception literature by comparing perceptions of transgender and cisgender perpetrators. This study utilised an experimental, mixed-level two-factor design, comprised of 'Perpetrator Gender' (Cisgender Male x Transgender Female x Transgender Male) and 'Prior Relationship' (Ex-partner x Stranger). 501 participants were presented with one of six vignettes, and responded to scale items concerning threat, risk of violence and the need for police intervention. Main effect analyses revealed significant differences in perceptions of threat between stranger and ex-partner perpetrators, and between cisgender and transgender perpetrators. No significant differences were found in perceptions of threat for transgender female and transgender male perpetrators. Interaction effects revealed that the prior-relationship misconception was not influenced by perpetrator gender identification. Forensic implications include specialised training of police, and the inclusion of stalking victims in domestic violence support services. Broader societal implications focus on the representations of stalking in the media. Limitations and suggestions for future research are discussed.

Key Words: Stalking, Prior-Relationship, Transgender, Threat.

Introduction

1.1 Stalking Misconceptions

Stalking is considered a relatively new crime; despite the prolonged existence of intrusive and proximity-seeking behaviours (Van Der Aa, 2018), the United Kingdom did not introduce legislation specific to stalking until 2012 (Petherick, 2017). Prior to this, stalking-like behaviours were legislated by the Protection from Harassment Act, introduced in 1997 (Maple, Short & Brown, 2011). At present, there is no statutory definition of stalking (Van Der Aa, 2018). However, presentations cited in literature and legislation discuss systematic, repetitive and intrusive behaviours (Van Der Aa, 2018) that cause the victim fear or apprehension (Petherick, 2017).

The absence of a statutory definition has resulted in public perceptions of stalking behaviours that often misrepresent the reality (Sheridan, Gillett, Davies, Blaauw, & Patel, 2003). There is a misconception about how the existence of a prior relationship between the victim and offender impacts threat and likelihood of violence (Weller, Hope & Sheridan, 2013). The public perception deems stranger stalkers the most threatening and harmful perpetrators; stalking behaviours are considered more alarming and distressing when conducted by a stranger (Scott & Sheridan, 2011). Furthermore, participants agree that stalking is more likely to cause mental or physical harm and require police intervention when performed by a stranger (Scott, Lloyd & Gavin 2010). However, this is not reflective of the actual risk posed by stranger stalkers, compared to ex-partners. Statistics show that ex-partner stalkers pose the greatest risk of violence to their victim (Weller et al., 2013), with the risk increasing when domestic violence was present during the relationship (Monckton-Smith, Szymanska & Haile, 2017). This misconception is not only held by the public, but is also found within forensic institutions. UK police officers have been found to hold perceptions of stranger stalkers that broadly map onto those held by the public, despite their extensive training and potential involvement in contradictory cases (Weller et al., 2013). It has even been reported that strangers are significantly more likely to be convicted for stalking-related offences, compared to ex-partners (Sheridan & Davies, 2001).

1.2 Gender Stereotypes

Further misconceptions have been identified in public perceptions of male stalkers compared to female stalkers. In reality, males and females perpetrate comparable rates of stalking in both adult (Thomas, Purcell, Pathè & Mullen, 2008), and youth populations (Ybarra, Langhinrichsen-Rohling & Mitchell, 2017). This has resulted in similar incidences of severe violence across male and female stalkers (Thompson, Dennison & Stewart, 2012). However, the public report a stereotyped view that males are more likely to be violent and induce bodily harm, whilst females are less threatening and do not require the same level of police intervention (Sheridan et al., 2003). In addition, violence perpetrated by female stalkers is perceived as more justified than that perpetrated by males (Thompson et al., 2012). Reasons for this justification are discussed below.

1.3 The Just World Hypothesis

Stalking misconceptions are often explained using principles of the Just World Hypothesis (JWH). The JWH was proposed by Lerner and Simmons (1966), who postulated that people need to view their social world as orderly, and maintain the belief that people get what they deserve, and therefore deserve what they get.

When explaining the prior-relationship misconception, Scott et al., (2010) reasoned that ex-partner stalkers are perceived to be more justified because their behaviours constitute the natural process of a breakup. The stalking is perceived as a domestic situation that requires no outside intervention (Gavin & Scott, 2016). Without any context on relationship breakdown, participants might assume that the victim has done something wrong and therefore deserves the behaviour (Scott & Sheridan, 2011). However, these perceptions change when context about physical abuse on behalf of the ex-partner is provided (Duff & Scott, 2013).

Interestingly, these justifications are more readily applied when the ex-partner is a male, compared to female. Gavin and Scott (2016) theorised that courtship behaviours and the pursuit of a romantic partner is traditionally seen as the male's role, and so is more readily accepted in stalking contexts when the perpetrator is male. Conversely, male victims of stalking are perceived to be more at fault compared to female victims. Males are judged to be stronger and more aggressive than females (Lyndon et al., 2012), and are seen as having more power to assuage the situation and prevent the behaviour (Sheridan et al., 2003). The perception of

females as the weaker gender invites the assumption that, in a 'Just World', a female would not be violent towards a male without good reason (Sheridan et al., 2003), hence why female perpetrators are seen as more justified (Thompson et al., 2012). These perceptions are reinforced by the fact that male stalking victims are significantly less likely to report their victimisation (Meloy & Boyd, 2003).

1.4 Transgender Populations

There is one population that remains virtually unexplored in stalking literature; a group with the potential to add a new dimension to gender stereotypes in stalking research. Broadly, the term 'transgender' describes individuals whose gender identity or expression does not align with their sex at birth (King, Hughto & Operario, 2020). This term is antonymic to the term 'cisgender', which refers to individuals whose sense of gender expression and identity aligns with their assigned sex at birth (Cava, 2016).

Recent demographic measures estimate a population of up to 500,000 trans-people residing in the UK (Government Equalities Office, 2018). Since 2016, the number of UK prisons housing transgender inmates has risen from 33 to 44, equating to a figure of at least 139 incarcerated individuals (Government Equalities Office, 2018). However, these figures only include those who have legally changed their gender (Lamble, 2012), meaning the true population is likely much larger. This increase in the transgender prison population means that forensic research must become much more inclusive of transgender populations, so to create an evidence base that is comparable to research with cisgender offenders.

Stalking literature within trans-populations is very limited. Cisgender and transgender females are at greater risk of stalking victimisation than their male counterparts (Fedina, Backes, Sulley, Wood & Busch-Armendariz, 2019), and those in the LGBTQIA+ community are more likely to self-report experiencing intrusive and stalking-like experiences compared to heterosexual and cisgender counterparts (Sheridan, Scott & Campbell, 2019). There has been no attempt within the literature to research public perceptions of transgender stalking perpetrators. The present study will seek to address this omission. If perceptions differ solely on the basis of the perpetrator gender identification, this could have

implications for the types of cases being reported to the police and going to trial (Thompson et al., 2012).

1.5 Perceptions of Trans-perpetrators

At present, there is conflicting evidence within the literature about whether trans-perpetrators are judged more harshly than their cis-counterparts. Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, Turner, Austin & Worchel, 1979) states that people categorise themselves into social groups with like-individuals. These social groups are used as reference points whereby individuals can discern whether they are of higher or lower status than other groups (McCullough, Dispenza, Chang & Zeligman, 2019). Those in outgroups are often judged more harshly (Baumgartner, Gotte, Gugler & Fehr, 2012); their behaviour more readily perceived in a negative way (Schiller, Baumgartner & Knoch, 2014). Participants endorse greater perceptions of guilt when the hypothetical defendant is a member of a minority outgroup (Leippe, Bergold & Eisenstadt, 2017), particularly when the victim is a member of the in-group (Yudkin et al., 2016). Research concerned with transgender perpetrators has found perceptions in-line with these principles, although this was not specific to stalking. Ringger (2020) used crime vignettes to study perceptions of guilt for prostitution, vandalism and marijuana possession. Participants had increased perceptions of guilt when the perpetrator was transgender compared to cisgender. Ringger (2020) attributed these findings to social identity principles of negative out-group judgements.

However, there is non-forensic research in the literature that stereotypes trans-people as less threatening than their cis-counterparts. Gazzola and Morrison (2014) identified cultural and personal stereotypes of trans-people as being non-criminal and non-abusive, with transgender females also being described as non-violent. Furthermore, there was a widely held stereotype that trans-people were confused, and that their exclusion from society meant they should be pitied. Bariq (2018) reported similar findings, whereby transgender perpetrators were judged as less guilty for crimes such as murder and robbery compared to cis-counterparts. The present study will address this conflict in relation to perceptions of stalking perpetrators.

An additional area of interest is how perceptions of trans-perpetrators may change depending on whether the perpetrator is transgender male or transgender female.

As previously mentioned, male stalking perpetrators are perceived as more threatening and aggressive (Sheridan et al., 2003). It could be assumed that the same perceptions would therefore be present for transgender males. However, research has identified a tendency within cis-populations to mis-gender their transgender peers, and use pronouns inconsistent with their gender identity (Nadal, Skolnik & Wong, 2012). Trans-people are often not accepted in spaces that do not align with their assigned sex at birth, such as in gender-specific sports leagues (Atteberry-Ash, Woodford & Centre, 2018), or gender-segregated changing rooms (Callahan & Zukowski, 2019). Furthermore, transgender females are stereotyped to have masculine features such as broad shoulders, whilst transgender males are described as petite compared to their cis-counterparts (Gazzola et al., 2014).

1.6 Aims and Predictions

The first aim of the present study is to build on research concerning the prior-relationship misconception. The misconception is robust throughout literature, and so it is predicted that the present study will replicate these results and find increased endorsement of threat for stranger stalkers. This study is unique in that it will include both transgender and cisgender perpetrators when investigating the misconception.

This study will use a general population sample. At present, much of the conflicting literature concerning perceptions of trans-people has used a student sample (Gazzola et al., 2014; Ringger, 2020; Bariq, 2018). Norton and Herek (2013) noted that student samples are strongly influenced by the generally liberal and egalitarian culture common to most campuses. Their research with an adult population found that attitudes towards trans-people were more negative than attitudes towards gay or lesbian populations. Furthermore, the present study has the most methodological similarity to Ringger (2020), who despite a student sample, still found harsher perceptions of trans-perpetrators. Therefore, it is predicted that transgender perpetrators will be perceived as more threatening than their cis-counterparts.

Finally, it is predicted that transgender females will be perceived as more threatening than transgender males. Despite transgender females being described as non-violent in Gazzola et al., (2014) research, there is an extensive evidence

base that sees trans-people as being associated with their sex at birth (Nadal et al., 2012). Cisgender male perpetrators are perceived as more dominant and aggressive (Lyndon et al., 2012), and so it is likely that transgender females will be perceived the same way.

1.7 Hypotheses

On the basis of relevant literature and the outlined predictions, the following hypotheses are proposed:

(1) Stranger stalkers will be perceived as more threatening than ex-partner stalkers.

(2) Transgender stalkers will be perceived as more threatening than cisgender stalkers.

(3) Transgender female stalkers will be perceived as more threatening than transgender male stalkers.

Method

2.1 Participants

The minimum sample size for this study was calculated using G*Power software. Assuming 0.05 statistical significance, 0.8 power, and a medium effect size, an a-priori ANOVA power calculation determined that a minimum sample of 128 was needed. The medium effect size was assumed on the basis of similar previous research by Duff and Scott (2013).

Participants were recruited online, using three social media platforms (Twitter, Instagram and Facebook). Participation was voluntary, with no reward or compensation offered. This study was open to the general public, however participants had to be over the age of 18 to adhere to ethical guidelines set by the British Psychological Society. This was the only exclusion criterion. 512 participants submitted responses for this study, however 11 were excluded for being under the age of 18, leaving 501 responses for data analysis. There were no missing cases or non-respondents.

2.2 Design

This study utilised an experimental, mixed-level two-factor design, comprised of 'Perpetrator Gender' (Cisgender Male x Transgender Female x Transgender Male) and 'Prior Relationship' (Ex-partner x Stranger). Participants were assigned to one of the following conditions:

1. Cisgender Male (Ex-partner)
2. Cisgender Male (Stranger)
3. Transgender Female (Ex-partner)
4. Transgender Female (Stranger)
5. Transgender Male (Ex-partner)
6. Transgender Male (Stranger)

2.3 Materials

This study was created and distributed online using JISC Software.

Demographics

The first three items were dedicated to the demographic information of the sample. Participants reported their gender (Male, Female, or Other), age (in years), and ethnicity (White, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and Other).

Condition Selection

JISC Software does not allow random allocation of participants to different conditions; there has to be a process of selection. To overcome this, there was an item that asked participants to choose one shape from a list of six (Rhombus, Oval, Pentagon, Heptagon, Hexagon and Octagon). The shape selected would determine the condition. At the point of selection, participants were blind to the outcome of each shape, and were not aware of the multiple conditions. For the number of participants in each condition, see Appendix D.

Contextual Sentences and Vignettes

Each condition consisted of two contextual sentences, and one vignette. The victim contextual sentence was the same across conditions:

'Lucy is a 24 year old female, with no history of mental health issues, nor any criminal convictions'.

The perpetrator contextual sentence contained the same information about mental health and criminal convictions, however contained additional information about gender identity. The name changed from 'Josh' to 'Jade' depending on the condition, with gender pronouns changed accordingly:

'Jade is a 25 year old transgender female. She was born male, however has since fully transitioned to a female. Jade has no previous history of mental health illness, nor does she have any previous criminal convictions'.

The purpose of these sentences was to eliminate any confounding assumptions about the perpetrator. This was particularly important for transgender perpetrators, as trans-people have disproportionate arrest rates (Grant, Mottet, Tanis, Harrison, Herman & Keisling, 2011) and are often stigmatised as having mental health issues (Reed, Franks & Scherr, 2015).

The stalking behaviours described in each vignette were the same across conditions. The perpetrator name changed from 'Josh' to 'Jade', and adjustments were made when the perpetrator was a stranger, for instance '*desire to get back together*' became '*desire to go on a date'*:

'Josh has been calling Lucy both at work and home, sometimes up to three times a day, despite Lucy not calling back. Josh sent Lucy some chocolates and a card, expressing his desire to get back together. Lucy has seen Josh a couple of times when she has been out and about near her house. On one of these occasions Josh did approach her and asked if they could talk through their issues. One evening whilst cooking in her kitchen, Lucy thought she saw Josh standing near her garden, however she could not be sure'.

The introductory sentences at the beginning of each vignette changed depending on whether the perpetrator was an ex-partner or a stranger:

'Lucy and Josh met in a bar, and went on to date for around eight months. However, towards the end of the relationship, Lucy began to feel unhappy in the relationship, and decided to end it. This was around two weeks ago'.

'Lucy and Josh met in a bar two weeks ago, and after a brief conversation, exchanged numbers. At the end of the night, Josh asked Lucy on a date, but Lucy decided to decline as she wasn't looking for a relationship at that time'.

Scale Response Questions

In each condition, the vignettes were followed by four statements and four scale response items. The items were measured using 4-point (1-4) Likert-type scales, whereby a higher number corresponded to a higher level of agreement ('Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, and Strongly Agree'). The statements were identical in all six conditions, apart from the perpetrator name.

1. Josh's behaviour constitutes stalking.
2. Josh poses a threat to Lucy.
3. Josh is likely to be violent towards Lucy.
4. Josh's behaviour requires police intervention and possibly criminal charges.

Conditions with a transgender perpetrator had one additional item. Participants were asked to indicate on a numeric scale (1-5) how masculine or feminine they imagined the perpetrator to be. Participants could only choose one response.

2.4 Procedure

Participants saw an online advertisement for a study entitled 'Perceptions of Stalking'. The advertisement stated that the study should take no longer than 5 minutes, and that under 18's were not eligible.

After clicking onto the study, participants were presented with an 'Information Sheet' (Appendix A) followed by a 'Consent Form' (Appendix B). In order to proceed, participants had to agree ('Yes') with the information on the consent form, and therefore give consent to take part in the study.

The first three questions of the study collected sample demographic data (Gender, Age and Ethnicity). Participants were then asked to select a shape in order to assign their condition. Each condition was comprised of two contextual sentences, a vignette, and four scale-response questions (as outlined in *2.3 Materials*). The conditions with a transgender perpetrator had an additional question concerning perceptions of masculinity and femininity.

Upon completion of the study, participants read a 'Debrief Form' (Appendix C) that outlined the aims of the research and contact details of the researchers. The

debrief form also gave contact information for stalking helplines and additional sources of support.

2.5 Treatment of Data

The data analysis plan for this study was based on previous research by Scott and Sheridan (2011), and Duff and Scott (2013). One-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were performed to determine the influence of prior-relationship and gender identification on perceptions of stalking, threat, risk of violence and the need for police intervention. In accordance with Duff and Scott (2013), parametric analyses are reported for all hypotheses despite violations of the normality assumption. ANOVA is robust to violations when sample sizes are similar across conditions (Pallant, 2013), which was the case for both Hypothesis 1 (*Ex-Partner* = 259, *Stranger* = 242) and Hypothesis 3 (*Transgender Female* = 166, *Transgender Male* = 173). Furthermore, non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis tests were performed for all hypotheses (see Appendix E), and the outcomes did not change.

Results

The means and standard deviations for the four scale items across the different conditions are presented in Table 1.

3.1 Participants

The sample comprised of 219 males (43.7%) and 281 females (56.1%). One participant selected 'Other', but did not provide further clarification about their gender identity. The average age of participants was 29.5 years (*SD*= 12.45), with a range of 18-75. The majority of the participants were White (91.6%), followed by Asian (2.8%), Black or African American (1.6%) and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (0.4%). A further 18 participants (3.6%) selected 'Other' for their ethnicity.

3.2 Hypothesis One

In accordance with predictions made in Hypothesis One, the behaviour was deemed to constitute stalking, $F(1, 499) = 54.71$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta 2 = 0.09$, pose a threat $F(1, 499) = 54.70$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta 2 = 0.09$, have risk of violence $F(1, 499) = 19.95$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta 2 = 0.04$, and require police intervention $F(1, 499) = 36.89$, p

<0.001, η2 = 0.07 in conditions where the perpetrator was a stranger, compared to an ex-partner.

3.3 Hypothesis Two

Contrary to expectations, there were no significant differences in perceptions of stalking *F*(1,499) 0.53, *p* = 0.468, η2 = 0.001, nor the need for police intervention *F*(1,499) 0.95, *p* = 0.330, η2 = 0.002 between cisgender and transgender perpetrators. There were significant differences between perceptions of threat *F*(1,499) 7.52, *p* = 0.006, η2 = 0.015, and the likelihood of violence *F*(1,499) 4.90, *p* = 0.027, η2 = 0.010. However, these differences were not in the expected direction (see Table 1), as participants endorsed threat more when the perpetrator was cisgender.

3.4 Hypothesis Three

Contrary to the predictions made in Hypothesis Three, there were no significant differences in perceptions of stalking *F*(1,337) 0.73, *p* = 0.394, η2 = <0.01, threat *F*(1,337) 0.27, *p* = 0.601, η2 = < 0.01, risk of violence *F*(1,337) 0.01, *p* = 0.901, η2 = <0.01, nor need for police intervention *F*(1,337) 0.79, *p* = 0.375, η2 = <0.001, between conditions with a transgender female perpetrator, compared to a transgender male.

3.5 Interaction Effects

Interaction effects between prior-relationship and cis*trans identification were non-significant *F*(1, 497) 0.113, *p* = 0.737, η2 = <0.001. Likewise, interaction effects between prior-relationship and trans-female*trans-male identification were non- significant *F*(1, 339) 1.637, *p* = 0.202, η2 = 0.005. Perceptions of stranger and ex-partner stalkers did not change on the basis of perpetrator gender identification.

3.6 Masculinity and Femininity

In transgender female conditions, 24.7% of participants chose responses that corresponded with 'masculine' (1 = 3%, 2 = 21.7%). 33.7% of participants chose the response that was neutral. 41.5% chose responses that corresponded with 'feminine' (4 = 30.7%, 5 = 10.8%). In transgender male conditions, 50.3% chose responses corresponding with masculine (1 = 13.9%, 2 = 36.4%). 35.8%

remained neutral, whilst 13.9% chose responses that corresponded with feminine (4 = 5.2%, 5 = 8.7%).

Table 1.

Means and standard deviations for the four scale-response items by condition.

		Scale Response Items							
		Constitutes Stalking		Threat		Violence		Police Intervention	
		M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Hypothesis One	Ex-Partner (*N*=259)	3.01	0.68	2.62	0.71	2.17	0.57	2.42	0.73
	Stranger (*N*=242)	3.46	0.68	3.06	0.62	2.41	0.61	2.82	0.73
Hypothesis Two	Cisgender (*N*=162)	3.26	0.79	2.97	0.74	2.36	0.62	2.66	0.82
	Transgender (*N*=339)	3.21	0.68	2.77	0.68	2.24	0.58	2.59	0.73
Hypothesis Three	Transgender Female (*N*=166)	3.24	0.68	2.75	0.70	2.23	0.58	2.55	0.70
	Transgender Male (*N*=173)	3.18	0.68	2.79	0.67	2.24	0.58	2.62	0.75

Discussion

In accordance with previous literature (Scott et al., 2010; Scott et al., 2011) and the predictions made in Hypothesis One, stranger stalkers were perceived as more threatening than ex-partner stalkers. Significant differences were found in the perceptions of threat between cisgender and transgender stalkers, however these differences were not in the expected direction. Contrary to Hypothesis Two, participants perceived behaviour as more threatening and with greater risk of violence when the stalker was cisgender compared to transgender. Finally, findings related to Hypothesis Three show no significant differences in perceptions of threat, nor any other scale response items between transgender male and transgender female perpetrators.

Prior Relationship

The present study has replicated the findings for the prior-relationship misconception of stalking. Participants perceived the behaviour to constitute stalking, pose a threat, have increased risk of violence, and require police

intervention when conducted by a stranger. These findings did not change on the basis of perpetrator gender identification. The prior relationship misconception is robust throughout stalking literature, and so the replication of these findings within the present study increases the reliability of the findings, and the validity of the research design.

In accordance with previous research, principles of a 'Just World' can be used to explain these findings. Many of the behaviours outlined in the vignettes could be considered harmless when performed in isolation (Sheridan et al., 2001). One could go further, and say that behaviours such as sending chocolates and a card could even be perceived as romantic. Hence, participants could justify the persistence of such behaviours on behalf of an ex-partner (Scott et al., 2010), regardless of any discomfort on behalf of the victim. The intrusive nature of the behaviour can be justified by the potential heartbreak and emotional trauma (Roberts, 2002), in a way that would not be possible in the case of strangers.

The existence of a prior-relationship also allows for ambiguity about who is to blame for the problematic behaviour. Unwanted persistence on behalf of a stranger could be seen as a violation of personal boundaries and disregard for the victim's feelings (Scott, Gavin, Sleath & Sheridan, 2014). However, in the case of an ex-partner, the persistence could be perceived as a reasonable response to the victim's behaviour. The vignette noted that it was the victim who became unhappy in the relationship, and that they did not return their ex-partners calls. Participants may have felt that the ex-partner was owed more of an explanation, or even a second chance. Romantic history between victim and perpetrator can increase feelings of perpetrator-directed sympathy (Gavin & Scott, 2016) and allow for more fault to be attributed to the victim (Scott et al., 2014).

Gender Identification

It was hypothesised that transgender stalkers would be perceived as more threatening than cisgender stalkers, on the basis of negative out-group perceptions (Tajfel et al., 1979), and previous research with similar methods (Ringger, 2020). This hypothesis was not supported; cisgender perpetrators were perceived as more threatening with a greater risk of violence. The findings are in line with previous research by Gazzola et al., (2014) that identified stereotypes of trans-people as non-criminal and non-violent. These findings could be attributed

to the age of participants in the present study. Despite not targeting a student sample, the mean age of participants was 29.5 years, with 261 participants between the ages of 18-22. Students and young people tend to be more liberal and accepting of trans-people (Zell & Bernstein, 2014), and therefore might have reduced perceptions of threat compared to an older sample.

This raises a question of why the findings were not in line with Ringger (2020), who found harsher trans-perceptions despite a student sample and a similar method. The present study is the first to investigate perceptions of trans-perpetrators in relation to stalking. It is therefore important to consider how stalking may differ from crimes chosen by Ringger (2020). Despite no statutory definition of staking, there is a consensus that the intrusive behaviour should induce fear within the victim (Owens, 2016). Stereotypes of trans-people as non-violent and non-abusive (Gazzola et al., 2014) may have reduced perceptions of fear and caused low endorsement of threat. This might have had less relevance in Ringger's (2020) research, as the crimes selected were non-violent. This could also explain the conflicting research by Bariq (2018), whereby trans-perpetrators were found non-guilty for crimes such as murder.

Hypothesis Three was also not supported, as there were no significant differences in perceptions of threat for transgender female and transgender male perpetrators. There is a wealth of evidence to suggest that trans-people are perceived to still belong to their sex assigned at birth (Gazzola et al., 2014; Lyndon et al., 2012). Furthermore, 58.4% of participants in the trans-female condition chose responses that corresponded with being masculine or neutral, as opposed to feminine. This creates a question of how transgender female participants can be associated with their sex assigned at birth, but not be perceived in the same way as cisgender male perpetrators. One explanation is that stereotypes of being non-criminal (Gazzola et al., 2014) are applied indiscriminately to trans-females and trans-males, and therefore eradicate any gender-specific stereotypes applied to stalking perpetrators.

An alternative explanation is dependent on a distinction between perceptions of physical features, and perceptions of personality traits. Gazzola et al., (2014) found that transgender females were stereotyped as having feminine personality traits and hobbies. They were associated with employment that was nurturing or

low-skilled, both of which are reflective of feminine stereotypes. However, they were ultimately perceived to still have the physical features of a man; tall, broad shoulders with large hands and feet. Perhaps the perception of a feminine and soft personality was sufficient to counteract the associations with male physical features, and thus decrease endorsement of threat. Firm conclusions about this distinction cannot be made from the present study. Participants did not clarify or distinguish between personality and appearance when reporting perceptions of masculinity and femininity. Therefore, further research is needed to validate these claims.

Forensic Implications

The biggest difference in perceptions of threat were between strangers (*M* = 3.06) and ex-partners (*M* = 2.62). Although statistically significant, differences in perceptions of threat for cisgender (*M* = 2.97) and transgender (*M* = 2.77) perpetrators were much smaller, and indicative of low overall endorsement of threat. Therefore, it cannot be said with confidence that these differing perceptions of threat for transgender and cisgender perpetrators would cause any differences in real-world responses. For instance, significant differences in perceptions of threat did not equate to significant differences in the need for police intervention. Conversely, the difference for prior-relationship was much larger, and did produce a significant difference in the need for police intervention. Furthermore, there is evidence that in the real-world, stranger stalkers are more likely to be found guilty (Sheridan et al., 2001). Hence, it is the prior-relationship misconception that should be prioritised in real-world incidences of stalking.

It is evident that not enough is currently being done to address the prior-relationship misconception. The consequences of this could be very dangerous, as people being stalked by their ex-partner may not realise the potential danger. At a broader societal level, change could come from accurate representations of stalking in the media. Whilst there are some films that depict stalking following a relationship breakdown, these often entail romantic idealisations of obsessed lovers who continue their pursuit despite rejection (Spitzberg & Cadiz, 2002). Recent media representations are fixated on narratives that feature lonely, lovesick or mentally ill strangers who seek intimacy with their unknown victims

(Korkodeilou, 2020), such as '*You*' on Netflix, or BBC's '*The Fall'*. These sensationalist portrayals of stranger stalkers could hinder public understanding of intrusive behaviours, and prevent people from reporting more realistic experiences of stalking to the police (Korkodeilou, 2020). Similar media representations of sexual assault have been challenged with consent campaigns that target grey areas of assault in romantic relationships (Groszhans, 2018). Similar steps could be taken to challenge perceptions of unwanted persistence from an ex-partner.

Challenging media representations of stalking is not sufficient. Research with real stalking victims found that they felt dissatisfied with police response to their case (Taylor-Dunn, Bowen & Gilchrist, 2018). Often, police would justify or minimise the behaviour when it was committed by an ex-partner. One victim was told that private images posted by her ex-partner were 'not indecent enough' to warrant any further action, whilst another was told that her ex-partner was perfectly entitled to sit outside of her house (Taylor-Dunn et al., 2018). These responses could prevent victims from pressing charges or going to trial, therefore contributing to statistics that see stranger stalkers receive more guilty convictions (Sheridan et al., 2001). Hence, techniques need to be used within the police to help counteract the minimisation of ex-partner behaviour. Evidence has shown that specialised Family Crime training can make police less susceptible to misconceptions (Scott, Nixon & Sheridan, 2013), and so there should be a movement to prioritise training that can address the dangers posed by ex-partner stalkers.

There is evidence that for crimes such as domestic violence, the referral of victims to an external support service can have a positive impact on the likelihood of a successful prosecution (Taylor-Dunn, 2015). These services are not as readily available for victims of stalking (Taylor-Dunn et al., 2018). Domestic violence services could become more inclusive of victims who experience ex-partner stalking. This could increase the number of ex-partner cases going to trial, and therefore challenge the perception that only strangers pose a threat.

Limitations and Future Research

As previously mentioned, the main limitation of the present study was the disproportionate representation of young people aged 18-22 in the sample (M = 29.5). Although the study was open to the general public, the decision to advertise solely on social media may have made the research more accessible to younger people, and less inclusive of older generations. It would be useful to replicate the present study exclusively with a non-student, older sample. This could clarify whether the findings are reflective of non-criminal transgender stereotypes (Gazzola et al., 2014), or are the product of liberal, trans-accepting student attitudes (Zell & Bernstein, 2014). In addition, future research could explore whether non-criminal transgender stereotypes are dependent on the presence of violence or physical harm coming to the victim. This could raise questions of how gender minority defendants can obtain a fair trial (Ringger, 2020), depending on the type of crime for which they are accused.

There were elements of the research design that may have had an extraneous effect on responses to the scale items. Contextual sentences about perpetrator mental health and criminal history may have influenced perceptions of violence and the need for police intervention. The sentences were designed to counteract assumptions held about trans-people (Grant et al., 2011; Reed et al., 2015). However, the impression that the perpetrator was previously law-abiding and of sound mind might have reduced the likelihood that participants would endorse risk of violence or the need for police intervention, regardless of prior-relationship or gender identification. The hypotheses were therefore focused on threat alone, with the other items used to supplement findings. Future research could remove these contextual sentences, to see how this impacted perceptions. Furthermore, the behaviours outlined in the vignettes were not inclusive of all intrusive behaviour. The posting of indecent images or intimidation of victim family members are examples of other behaviours cited in real-world stalking cases (Taylor-Dunn et al., 2018). The examples chosen for the present study were somewhat ambiguous in relation to threat, as they would be considered harmless when performed in isolation (Sheridan et al., 2001). This decision was made to ensure that the behaviours could have feasibly been performed by a stranger; for instance, participants might question how a stranger obtained indecent images of the victim. Furthermore, the use of a 4-point scale meant

that participants were not able to respond in a way that was neutral. The behaviours described in the vignettes may not have been severe enough for participants to justify high endorsement of threat, and so without this neutral response, the overall endorsement was low. Future research could investigate how perceptions of threat may change depending on the type and severity of behaviours.

Finally, the present study did not investigate all victim-perpetrator combinations that could be of interest. The inclusion of cisgender female perpetrators could allow for cis/trans gender-specific comparisons, whilst the inclusion of transgender victims could have an interesting impact on perceptions of victim blaming. Furthermore, future research could replicate the present study but with an exclusive sample of transgender participants. Trans-people would likely hold different stereotypes of their own social group, and may demonstrate negative out-group perceptions for cisgender perpetrators, or even cisgender victims.

Conclusions

The present study has demonstrated that the prior-relationship misconception is still present within stalking literature. Consent campaigns could be used to challenge media representations and increase reporting of ex-partner perpetrators. From the point of reporting, specialised police training and inclusive victim support services could help increase the number of ex-partner cases going to trial. The present study also found that cisgender perpetrators were perceived as more threatening than their transgender counterparts, however further research is needed to determine whether this is the product of non-criminal stereotypes (Gazzola et al., 2014), or liberal student attitudes (Zell & Bernstein, 2014). Avenues for future research include replications exclusively with older or transgender samples, and with the inclusion of more severe or threatening behaviours.

Executive Summary

Client Group

This summary has relevance for UK police officers who are involved in family and domestic crimes. This summary may also have relevance to those who work in stalking or domestic violence victim support services.

Stalking Misconceptions

The absence of a firm statutory definition of stalking has resulted in public perceptions of stalking and like-behaviours that often misrepresent the reality (Sheridan, Gillett, Davies, Blaauw, & Patel, 2003). The public deem stranger stalkers the most threatening and harmful perpetrators; stalking behaviours are considered more alarming and distressing when conducted by a stranger (Scott & Sheridan, 2011). Furthermore, people are more likely to seek police intervention when the behaviour is conducted by a stranger (Scott, Lloyd & Gavin 2010). However, contrary to these perceptions, statistics show that ex-partner stalkers pose the greatest risk of violence to their victim (Weller, Hope & Sheridan, 2013), with the risk increasing when domestic violence was present during the relationship (Monckton-Smith, Szymanska & Haile, 2017). UK police officers have also reported these same perceptions, despite extensive training and any potential involvement in contradictory cases (Weller et al., 2013).

Further misconceptions have been identified in how the public perceive male stalkers compared to female stalkers. In reality, males and females have been found to perpetrate comparable rates of stalking in both adult (Thomas, Purcell, Pathè & Mullen, 2008), and youth populations (Ybarra, Langhinrichsen-Rohling & Mitchell, 2017). This has resulted in similar incidences of severe violence across male and female stalkers (Thompson, Dennison & Stewart, 2012). However, the public report a stereotyped view that males are more likely to be violent and induce bodily harm, whilst females are less threatening and do not require the same level of police intervention (Sheridan et al., 2003).

Transgender Perpetrators

Demographic measures estimate a recent increase in the number of transgender people residing in the UK, as well as housed in the prison population (Government Equalities Office, 2018). As a result, there has been a recent

introduction of forensic institutions that house transgender inmates only. The first is HMP Downview, a female closed category prison intended for persons who have transitioned from male to female. The introduction of trans-specific forensic institutions means that forensic research must become much more inclusive of transgender populations, so to create an evidence base that is comparable to research with cisgender offenders. Hence, the aim of the present study was to build on research into stalking misconceptions by including transgender perpetrators, and by comparing perceptions of threat between transgender and cisgender perpetrators.

Data Collection and Participants

This study created and distributed using JISC online software. It was advertised on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, and was suitable for participants over the age of 18. The sample comprised of 219 males and 281 females. The average age of participants was 29.5 years (*SD*= 12.45), with a range of 18-75. The majority of the participants were White (91.6%).

Key Findings

The present study found that the prior-relationship misconception is still present in public perceptions. Participants endorsed higher levels of threat when the perpetrator was a stranger compared to an ex-partner. This did not change on the basis of perpetrator gender identification. There were also significant differences in perceptions of threat between cisgender and transgender perpetrators, although these differences were much smaller, and overall endorsement of threat was low. There were no significant differences in perceptions of transgender female compared to transgender male perpetrators.

Implications and Suggestions

It is evident that not enough is currently being done to address the prior-relationship misconception. The consequences of this could be very dangerous, for instance those being stalked by their ex-partner may not realise the potential danger they are in. Useful change could come from within the UK police force. Research with real-world stalking victims found that they felt dissatisfied with police response to their case (Taylor-Dunn, Bowen & Gilchrist, 2018). The police in those cases were described to justify or minimise the behaviour when it was

committed by an ex-partner. One victim was told that private images posted by her ex-partner were 'not indecent enough' to warrant any further action, whilst another was told that her ex-partner was perfectly entitled to sit outside of her house. These responses could prevent victims from pressing charges or going to trial, therefore contributing to statistics that see stranger stalkers receive more guilty convictions (Sheridan et al., 2001). Evidence has shown that specialised Family Crime training can make police less susceptible to misconceptions (Scott, Nixon & Sheridan, 2013), and so there should be a movement to prioritise training that can address misconceptions about strangers and ex-partners.

There is evidence that for crimes such as domestic violence, the referral of victims to an external support service can have a positive impact on the likelihood of a successful prosecution (Taylor-Dunn, 2015). However, these services are not as readily available for victims of stalking (Taylor-Dunn et al., 2018). Domestic violence services could become more inclusive of victims who experience ex-partner stalking. This could increase the number of ex-partner cases going to trial, and therefore challenge the perception that only strangers pose a threat.

From a broader perspective, changes could be made to media portrayals of stalkers, to make them more reflective of reality. At present, popular streaming sites and mainstream television channels are fixated on narratives that feature lonely, lovesick or mentally ill strangers who seek intimacy with their unknown victims (Korkodeilou, 2020), such as '*You*' on Netflix, or BBC's '*The Fall'*. These sensationalist portrayals of stranger stalkers could hinder public understanding of intrusive behaviours, and prevent people from reporting more realistic experiences of stalking to the police (Korkodeilou, 2020). UK police should consider running awareness campaigns that challenge these media representations, and highlight the danger associated with minimising intrusive behaviours perpetrated by an ex-partner.

PowerPoint Presentation

PERCEPTIONS OF STALKING: A COMPARISON OF THE PRIOR-RELATIONSHIP MISCONCEPTION AND PERCEPTIONS OF THREAT FOR TRANSGENDER AND CISGENDER PERPETRATORS.

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1

RESEARCH AIMS AND RATIONALE

Prior Relationship Misconception
Stranger stalkers are perceived as more threatening than ex-partner stalkers (Scott et al. 2010).

Perpetrator Gender Identification
Male stalkers are perceived as more threatening than female stalkers (Sheridan et al. 2003).

Aims:
Build on stalking misconception research by including transgender perpetrators.
Compare perceptions of threat between:

- Ex-partner and Stranger Perpetrators
- Transgender and Cisgender Perpetrators
- Trans-female and Trans-male Perpetrators

2

RESEARCH METHODS

Participants;
219 males and 281 females.
Mean Age = 29.5. The majority of the sample were White (91.6%).

Design;
Between-participants, mixed-level two-factor design.

IV (1): Perpetrator Gender (Cis Male x Trans-Female x Trans-Male)
IV (2): Prior Relationship (Ex-partner x Stranger).
DV: Perceptions of Threat (Likert-Type Scale)

Materials;
Contextual sentence on prior-relationship and gender identification. One vignette describing stalking behaviours. Likert-Type Response Scales.

3

RESULTS

Gender Identification:
No significant differences in perceptions of trans-female and trans-male perpetrators. Cisgender perpetrators ($M = 2.97$) were perceived as significantly more threatening than transgender perpetrators ($M = 2.77$). However, the difference was small, and overall endorsement of threat was low.

Prior Relationship:
Strangers ($M = 3.06$) were perceived as significantly more threatening than ex-partners ($M = 2.62$).
This finding did not change on the basis of perpetrator gender identification.
This comparison yielded the biggest difference in endorsement of threat.

4

IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Addressing the Prior-Relationship Misconception

- Increase specialised Family Crime Police training (Scott et al. 2013). Increase support services for stalking victims (Taylor-Dunn, 2015)
- Move away from media narrative of mentally ill strangers. Be inclusive of more realistic stalking scenarios (Korkodeilou, 2020)

Suggestions for Future Research

- Future research should replicate the study with a non-student sample to determine the influence of liberal student attitudes on the findings (Zell et al. 2014).
- *Other directions for research:*
  Replicate with transgender sample.
  Change severity of stalking behaviour.

5

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6

Reflective Report

Conceptualisation

During my undergraduate degree, I wanted to conduct research on prejudice or bias in mock-jury settings, possibly exploring the influence of homosexuality in the victim-perpetrator relationship. However, I ended up being assigned to a dissertation that was cognitive-based, and so I was unable to pursue this further. Therefore, when the conceptualisation for the present study began, this was my initial area of interest.

I began researching perceptions of homosexual perpetrators, however I was struggling to find a gap in the literature that sparked my interest. At this point, I had not read the supervisor profiles in detail, as I thought I already had a good idea of what I wanted to do. However, when I read Dr. Simon Duff's supervisor profile, I became very interested in looking at stalking. I was surprised by the lack of a statutory definition of stalking, and also found previous research that used vignettes very clear and easy to follow. Furthermore, I thought it would be interesting to look at the prior-relationship misconception in the context of LGBTIQA+ relationships.

Preparation and Research Proposal

Following the completion of my brief research plan, I was allocated Simon as my research supervisor. Our first supervision took place on the 3rd October 2019. The focus of the session was mainly deciding on what the main focus of the research would be. I was considering many different research questions and topic areas, for example:

- Comparing the prior-relationship misconception in LGBTIQA+ and heterosexual relationships.
- Comparing perceptions of threat of cisgender and transgender stalking perpetrators.
- Comparing perceptions of threat in gay, lesbian and heterosexual relationships.

Simon had suggested limiting the scope of the research, as too many conditions and victim-perpetrator combinations would make it difficult to give enough attention to all the findings. He also pointed out that perceptions of transgender

perpetrators were completely unexplored, whereas there was some research into perceptions of stalking in gay and lesbian relationships. It became apparent that comparing perceptions of transgender and cisgender stalkers would be the best way to address an omission in the literature, and find something interesting.

Once I had established the focus of my research, I found the writing of the proposal quite straight forward and enjoyable. The research design consisted of three comparisons; ex-partners and strangers, cisgender and transgender stalkers, and trans-male and trans-female stalkers. These comparisons created six conditions, each of which consisting of one vignette and four scale response items. Creating the vignettes was relatively straight-forward, as there is quite a lot of stalking literature that uses the same design. My design was most similar to previous research by Duff and Scott (2013), and so I used the effect sizes from that study to inform the G*Power sample calculation in my proposal. The proposal was completed and given to Simon for feedback on the 11th November 2019. The main feedback points were focused on punctuation and referencing, however I was advised to add more about motivation and why this research would have practical use. Once these amendments were made, I focused on completion of the ethics form, including creating consent forms and debrief sheets.

There was just over a month wait between the submission of my ethics and getting ethical approval (20th January 2020 – 27th February 2020). My ethics was approved the first time, with only minor amendments. However, I made two changes to my proposal following ethical approval, and had to inform the ethics board of these changes;

1. An additional question was added to conditions with a transgender perpetrator. Participants were asked to rate on a numeric scale how masculine or feminine they imagined the perpetrator to be. This amendment was approved on 17th March 2020.
2. The second amendment was changing my analysis plan from the use of ANOVA to a Chi Square. This change was approved on 27th March 2020, however I later decided that ANOVA was the more appropriate choice. Details of this decision will be explained below.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection posed some challenges in the beginning, but didn't take as much time as I was expecting. For my undergraduate research project, I used Qualtrics software to create my online study, and so I was unfamiliar with JISC and how to set up my survey using new software. I spent two days looking for YouTube videos and online tutorials, and was really struggling. After those two days, I was told that JISC software used to be called BOS software. This was a mistake that cost unnecessary time, as there were plenty of useful BOS videos and tutorials online. The set up was then quite simple. The only real issue I faced was that JISC does not randomly allocate participants to conditions, and so I had to find a way to do this manually. I added an item where participants were asked to select one shape out of six options, and this would then route them to their condition. It is worth noting that participants did not know the outcomes of selecting the shapes.

Once the study was published, I reached my target sample (128 participants) within a matter of hours. My target demographic was simply anyone over the age of 18, and so this meant that a lot of people could access the research. I posted the study on a Facebook group for the area that I live in and got a good response. In addition, the research was shared by a professional Welsh rugby player with thousands of followers, which helped gain a large number of responses in a short amount of time. It took three days to reach 512 participants (2nd April – 4th April 2020). The main issue faced during data collection was the uneven distribution across conditions. Even though the shapes had no real meaning, significantly less participants were selecting 'Heptagon', which corresponded to the condition that described a transgender female stranger perpetrator. Similarly, a lot of participants were choosing 'Hexagon', which corresponded to a transgender male ex-partner. This meant that over the course of the three days, I had to monitor the spread of participants and remove the option to select the most popular shapes. I stopped data collection once the spread of participants across the six conditions was even.

Data analysis was the most stressful and challenging part of the process. I wrote my proposal in November 2019 with a plan to analyse my data using ANOVA. I then neglected any thought of data analysis until the completion of data

collection in April 2020. This was a mistake. My understanding of statistics was not good enough to go so long without thorough revision. When I exported my data into SPSS, I felt overwhelmed at the screen that was just full of 0's and 1's. I became confused by the layout of my data, and started to think that my data was actually categorical, hence why I amended my proposal to say Chi-square. However, when I scheduled a supervision with Simon, he reminded me that manipulations of my independent variable did not correspond to categories, but to a condition with multiple levels. I took a couple of days to refresh my understanding and read familiar research, and ultimately returned to my original plan of conducting ANOVA's. Following data cleaning and the recoding of variables, I discovered that my data violated the normality assumption of ANOVA. However, non-parametric analyses revealed that the outcomes did not change, and so I proceeded to report ANOVA in my write up. Overall, the process of data analysis took about three weeks, and was finished by 30th May 2020.

Writing the Research Paper

The process of actually writing up the research paper and making connections between predictions, the findings and other research is the part that I found the most enjoyable. I was actually glad that some of my hypotheses were not supported and went in the opposing direction, as it meant that I could try to be creative in explaining the findings, rather than just agreeing with everything that had been written in the introduction. I created several large mind-maps and Venn diagrams that contained findings from previous research, and tried to make connections from their results to the ones in my study.

One thing that I learned in during the write-up, was that there is a fine line between making things clear and easy for the reader, and then saying things that aren't quite correct. Simon noted how, in my discussion, I would try to make the means correspond to responses on the scale, i.e. 'Disagree', so that the means would be in context for the reader. Simon advised me to instead discuss 'low endorsement of threat', because it was incorrect to associate the means with responses in this way. This was a very valuable piece of advice, as I might have unintentionally given the impression that I didn't understand the means, when I was just trying to give context to the reader.

The Impact of COVID-19

COVID-19 and the closure of the university campus had both positive and negative impacts on my research project. Firstly, it helped ease some of my own stress and pressure about time management. My part-time job was stopped due to lock down restrictions, and so I didn't have to worry about balancing that with my research project. Secondly, I believe that my data collection time frame was much shorter because more people were at home, on their laptops with more free time to complete the survey. However, I did miss the experience of having face-to-face supervision. I feel that in-person contact allows for richer conversations and ideas to bounce back and forth in a way that cannot be replicated through email. Simon was always very responsive online and we did have Skype supervision, but I still maintain a preference for in-person interactions.

Main Strength and Weakness

I think my main weakness during this process was letting my stress get the better of me. Often, I would take feedback or useful suggestions and criticism, and then feel I need to change everything to make it better. One of the things I have learned from being supervised by Simon was to trust myself a bit more, and understand that considering other perspectives does not mean that what I've written is wrong. However, I think my main strength was that I worked extremely hard. I was always willing to make changes or re-work things to make the research better and of more practical use. Both my tendency to be self-critical, but also to work hard, are exemplified by the fact that I kept re-writing elements of the research paper. In total, I ended up writing four drafts of the research paper. As time went on and I developed a better understanding of my findings, I was able to make better connections and really refine my ideas. This is evident when comparing the introduction in my proposal to the introduction in my final research paper. The first drafts of my discussion were slightly confused and the forensic implications were not well developed. The more time I spent on it, the more I could separate out the findings in clear ways, whilst still making connections to the forensic field.

I am very proud of the final product and the research that I have produced. I have enjoyed the research project, and would be happy to develop this project

in some way. As cited in the research paper, I think it would be interesting to replicate the study with only transgender participants, to see how perceptions change. This is one way in which I could potentially move forward with the research project.

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Appendix

Appendix A: *Participant Information Sheet*

Perceptions of Stalking: A Comparison of the Prior-Relationship Misconception and Perceptions of Threat for Transgender and Cisgender Perpetrators.

Thank you for showing interest in participating in the present study. The data collected in this study will contribute to an MSc (Hons) Forensic and Criminological Psychology degree at the University of Nottingham.

WHAT WILL YOU NEED TO DO?

For this study, you will be asked to read one short paragraph (no more than five sentences) about one individual's behaviour towards another individual. You will then be asked to rate how strongly you agree with four statements made about the behaviour. Finally, you will be asked to answer three demographic-based questions about yourself (these will not be specific enough to identify you).

HOW LONG WILL THE STUDY LAST?

This study should last no longer than 8 minutes, and this is the only occasion in which you are required to take part.

ARE THERE ANY RISKS IN THE STUDY?

There are no physical risks involved in this study. The nature of the behaviour may be distressing to some participants due to topic sensitivity, however the study has been designed to limit this as far as possible.

THE RIGHT TO WITHDRAW

Please note that your participation is voluntary. You may withdraw at any point during the questionnaire for any reason, before submitting your answers, by pressing the 'Exit' button/ closing the browser. You do not have to answer questions you don't want to. However, once you have clicked the 'Submit' button at the end of the questionnaire, the data will be uploaded and cannot be retracted because it will not be traceable back to you.

THE RIGHT TO ANONYMITY

All data collected within this study will be anonymous and will not be traceable back to individual participants. Data will be accessed using a password-protected laptop using encryption while transferring and saving all data generated in the course of the research. All such data are kept on password-protected databases sitting on a restricted access computer system and would only be accessed by the research team. All research data and records will be stored for a minimum of 7 years and then destroyed. The anonymous data collected may be shared to allow reuse by the research team and other third parties for the purposes of research in this area only.

WHAT IF THERE IS A PROBLEM?

If you feel unhappy with any aspects of this study, you can contact the main author by email; lydia.cook@nottingham.ac.uk.

Alternatively, you could also contact the supervisor, Dr. Simon Duff by email; simon.duff@nottingham.ac.uk.

Both are based at School of Medicine, University of Nottingham, Jubilee Campus.

You can also contact the University of Nottingham Ethics Committee (Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences) by phone; +44 115 951 5559.

Appendix B: *Participant Consent Form*

Perceptions of Stalking: A Comparison of the Prior-Relationship Misconception and Perceptions of Threat for Transgender and Cisgender Perpetrators.

In order to participate in the study, we must be assured that you understand the nature of the research, and the data you will provide (as described on the 'Participant Information Sheet').

Please read the following statements, and tick the appropriate box at the end which best describes your understanding of the statements.

(1) I have read the information sheet for this study, and have understood what my role would be should I choose to participate.

(2) I understand that personal data about my demographic information will be collected (e.g. age, gender), but that this will not be traceable back to me.

(3) I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw at any time without explaining by pressing the 'exit' button or closing the browser.

(4) I understand that my data will only be accessed by the main author and supervisor, and that it will be stored on a protected laptop.

☐ **I agree with the above statements, and consent to take part in this study.**

☐ **I do not agree with the above statements, and do not wish to take part in this study.**

Appendix C: *Participant Debrief Sheet*

Perceptions of Stalking: A Comparison of the Prior-Relationship Misconception and Perceptions of Threat for Transgender and Cisgender Perpetrators.

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study. The main aim of the present study was see if the public would perceive the behaviours as more likened to stalking, and as more threatening, when the perpetrator was transgender. Participants were assigned randomly to one of the following conditions;

1. Cisgender male stalking cisgender female (ex-partner)

2. Cisgender male stalking cisgender female (stranger)

3. Transgender female (born male) stalking cisgender female (ex-partner)

4. Trans women (born male) stalking cisgender female (stranger)

5. Transgender male (born female) stalking cisgender female (ex-partner)

6. Transgender male (born female) stalking cisgender female (stranger)

The stalking behaviours were always identical, but the perpetrator was either transgender or cisgender. There will also be an investigation into whether stranger stalkers are perceived as more threatening than ex-partner stalkers. The anonymous responses will be collected together in a database and analysed using a software tool called SPSS, to see if there were any significant differences in perceptions of stalking threat between cis and transgender perpetrators, and between stranger and ex-partner perpetrators.

IF FURTHER ASSISTANCE IS NEEDED:

If you wish to seek more advice or support around the topic of stalking, you can contact one of the following groups:

(1) Confidential Emotional Support Line – 01708765200
(2) Paladin Stalking Advocacy Service – 2038664107
(3) National Stalking Helpline – 08088020300

As always, if you feel in any sort of danger please always call 999.

TO CONTACT THE RESEARCHERS

If you have any follow up questions, or want to be informed about the results of this study once analysis is complete, please email the main author: Lydia.cook@nottingham.ac.uk

Alternatively, you could also contact the supervisor, Dr. Simon Duff by email; simon.duff@nottingham.ac.uk.

Both are based at School of Medicine, University of Nottingham, Jubilee Campus.

Please note that now the study is completed, it will not be possible to withdraw your responses. However, none of the data provided in the study will be traceable back to any individual participant.

Appendix D: *Number of Participants in Each Condition*

Condition (Corresponding Shape)	Prior Relationship	Gender Identification	No. of Participants
Rhombus	Ex-partner	Cisgender Male	76
Oval	Stranger	Cisgender Male	86
Pentagon	Ex-partner	Trans-Female	83
Heptagon	Stranger	Trans-Female	83
Hexagon	Ex-partner	Trans-Male	100
Octagon	Stranger	Trans-Male	73

Appendix E: *Results for Non-Parametric Kruskal-Wallis Tests*

Hypothesis One: Ex-partner X Stranger

Constitutes Stalking: X^2 (1) 61.088, p = <0.001

Threat: X^2 (1) 50.193, p = <0.001

Risk of Violence: X^2 (1) 20.241, p = <0.001

Requires Police Intervention: X^2 (1) 35.477, p = <0.001

Hypothesis Two: Cisgender X Transgender

Constitutes Stalking: X^2 (1) 1.988, p = 0.159

Threat: X^2 (1) 7.876, p = 0.005

Risk of Violence: X^2 (1) 4.703, p = 0.030

Requires Police Intervention: X^2 (1) 0.898, p = 0.343

Hypothesis Three: Trans-Female X Trans-Male

Constitutes Stalking: X^2 (1) 0.728, p = 0.394

Threat: X^2 (1) 0.296, p = 0.586

Risk of Violence: X^2 (1) 0.002, p = 0.964

Requires Police Intervention: X^2 (1) 1.035, p = 0.309