

Investigating Sub-groups of Harassers: The Roles of Attachment, Dependency, Jealousy and Aggression

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Abstract The study aimed to classify non-harassers, minor, and severe harassers based on responses to measures of jealousy, dependency, attachment, perpetration, and victimization of relationship aggression, and harassment victimization, in a convenience sample of undergraduate students. Respondents ($n=177$) replied on the following scales: Unwanted Pursuit Behaviors Inventory (UPBI: Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al., *Violence and Victims* 15:73–89, 2000), Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS: Straus, *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 41:75–88, 1979, measuring physical and verbal aggression for respondents and their partners), Sexual Jealousy Scale (SJS: Nannini and Meyers, *The Journal of Sex Research* 37:117–122, 2000), Interpersonal Dependency Inventory (IDI: Hirschfeld et al., *Journal of Personality Assessment* 41:610–618, 1997), and the Relationship Questionnaire (RQ: Bartholomew and Horowitz, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 61:226–244, 1991, measuring adult attachment). Discriminant Function Analysis (DFA), with responses to these measures entered as predictors, produced significant differences between the groups in the univariate results on measures of: preoccupied attachment, jealousy, emotional reliance, verbal aggression and harassment victimization, and physical aggression perpetration. The functions identified by the DFA correctly classified 61% of cases, and identified the important roles of jealousy, dependency, attachment, and relationship aggression in harassment. Differing responses to the measurement of these can theoretically distinguish between non-, minor, and severe harassers.

Keywords Harassment · Stalking · Aggression · Attachment · Dependency · Jealousy

Introduction

One of the key risk factors for perpetration of stalking or harassment after relationship break-up is the perpetration of physical aggression during the relationship (e.g., Sheridan and Boon 2002). A number of studies have found an association between prior relationship aggression and later stalking or harassment, as well as physical aggression and stalking or harassment occurring in parallel. For example, Coleman (1997) found severe stalking after termination of an intimate relationship was associated with both verbal and physical aggression during that relationship, implying that previous aggressive behavior may be indicative of future stalking after break-up. Similarly, Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al. (2000) found that those who were harassed after instigating the break-up of their intimate relationship were also physically abused by their partner while the relationship was still intact. Relationship aggression has more recently been found to be gender-neutral (or gender inclusive; Hamel 2006) in community samples (e.g., Straus and Ramirez 2002); that is, both partners engage in aggressive acts against the other, in a process of conflict and resolution.

However, other non-behavioral risk factors for engagement in harassment have been less well researched. In more recent years, a number of investigators have begun to explore harassment within an attachment framework. Initially proposed by Bowlby (1982, 1988) as a close emotional bond between child and caregiver, that can be secure or insecure, attachment theory has more recently been related to adult relationships. Hazan and Shaver (1987) applied the three-category model of childhood attachment

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patterns proposed by Ainsworth et al. (1978) to adult relationships: secure, ambivalent (also known as preoccupied), and avoidant attachments. Limitations to the three-category model (see Fraley and Shaver 2000) resulted in Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) conceptualizing attachment based on and described using two latent dimensions or axes: view of self and view of other. This resulted in separating the original avoidant category into two distinct patterns with opposing views of self; fearful and dismissing. Four adult attachment prototypes were therefore described: secure, dismissing, preoccupied, and fearful (the latter three are insecure attachment types). Securely-attached individuals have a positive view of both themselves and others. Those who are fearfully attached feel that they are unlovable or not worthy of the love and attention of another, and that other people are untrustworthy and unavailable to provide the love that is needed (a negative view of both self and other). Those with dismissive attachment styles have a high sense of self worth, but a negative view of others. Those with preoccupied attachments are characterized by a combination of a negative self model and a positive model of others. This means that they are highly dependent as well as extremely sensitive to possible stressful or threatening events, which evidently produce high levels of anxiety.

Meloy (1996) reported that the preoccupied attachment pattern is most similar to stalking behavior, and that preoccupied attachment is linked with unstable emotions, borderline personality organization (BPO), and obsessional thoughts that are all evident in stalkers, creating an overall personal disposition to engage in stalking. BPO is characterized by a number of seemingly negative behaviors or traits, including relationship instability, dependency and aggression (Dutton 1994). Kienlen et al. (1997) found that most stalkers in their sample had experienced some type of loss prior to their stalking behavior; almost half of these losses were the break up of an intimate relationship. Stalking behavior as a consequence of the loss of the attachment figure is very similar to what Bowlby described as separation anxiety: a negative reaction to separation from the attachment figure, which involves behavior aimed at regaining proximity to him/her. This threatened or actual loss may motivate the perpetrator to engage in physically aggressive acts or other actions constituting unwanted attention, to prevent the partner from leaving or to make them return to the relationship (e.g., Borochowitz and Eisikovits 2002; Vormbrock 1993).

Tonin (2004) compared attachment styles of a group of stalkers to matched groups of community and forensic samples. Combining the fearful, preoccupied, and dismissing attachment scales to form an overall insecure style, Tonin found that the stalking group was significantly more insecure than both the community and forensic samples.

Further, fixated stalkers (those with only one victim) showed a more preoccupied pattern of attachment than those stalkers classified as serial (more than one victim). Ravensberg and Miller (2003) presented a developmental theory of stalking behavior involving attachment as the central concept. An early insecure attachment style is maintained in later adult relationships, and preoccupied attachment is viewed as the pattern that would be most associated with stalking. Dye and Davis (2003) proposed a model of stalking that also included insecure attachment as one of the pathways resulting in stalking behavior.

Other issues related to attachment styles may also be important in the further understanding of the psychology of harassment. The roles of jealousy and dependency have been investigated in a limited number of research studies. According to Marazziti et al. (2003, p. 106), jealousy is “the perception of a threat of loss of a valued relationship to a real or imagined rival and it is a heterogenous condition ranging from normality to pathology, with different degrees of intensity, persistence and insight”. Jealousy can be a ‘normal’ tendency in relationships. Yet, it is distinguishable from a more extreme, pathological jealousy based on the intensity of the emotions, and the unreasonableness exhibited by those who are pathologically jealous. Davis et al. (2000) investigated the association between stalking-like behaviors and attachment, jealousy, control, and break-up context in college students. Generally, anger-jealousy scores were higher for those who were the recipient of the break-up, compared to those who were the instigator or who had mutually agreed with their partner to break-up, suggesting that those who did not initiate the break-up found it difficult to deal with the separation. Anger-jealousy also acted as a mediator between anxious attachment and stalking.

Roberts (2005) found that 57% of the former-intimate stalking victims reported that their partner had been jealous during the relationship. Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al. (2000) found that harassment victimization of those who had ended the intimate relationship was associated with their ex-partners’ jealousy and relationship aggression, and with the ex-partners’ insecure attachment. The victims also characterized their failed relationship as high in “possessive-dependent love”. However, the issue of dependency and former-intimate harassment has not been studied in any systematic way, which is surprising considering its close links with both attachment and jealousy.

The roles of attachment, jealousy, and dependency have been far more extensively researched in relation to the perpetration of relationship aggression or ‘domestic violence’ than for former-intimate harassment or stalking. Dutton et al. (1994) compared domestically violent men with those who were largely not violent and found that violent men scored higher on preoccupied and fearful

attachment measures, and higher on a jealous measure, than non-violent men. Males with a need for dominance and insecure attachment styles perpetrated the most physical violence towards their female partners (Mauricio and Gormley 2001). Babcock et al. (2000) investigated the attachment styles of samples of violent and non-violent husbands and found that husbands who were violent were far more likely to be classified as insecurely attached, than non-violent or unhappily married men. Further, males with preoccupied attachment specifically used violence or aggression because of fear of abandonment. This seems particularly pertinent when considering that harassers are likely to find it difficult to cope with separation from their intimate partner, resulting in harassment behavior to seek to re-establish the relationship.

In their research on violence and dependency, Buttell et al. (2005) found that violent men scored higher than non-violent men on a measure of interpersonal dependency. Similarly, Murphy et al. (1994) found that violent men scored significantly higher than two samples of non-violent men on measures of general and spouse-specific dependency.

Holtzworth-Munroe et al. (1997) also compared men who were violent in their marriages with two non-violent comparison groups (non-violent-distressed men [NVD], and non-violent-non-distressed men [NVND]), on measures of attachment (measured on three sub-scales: abandonment anxiety, avoidance of dependency, and discomfort with closeness) and spouse-specific dependency (measured on three sub-scales: anxious attachment, narrow focus, and need for nurturance from spouse). They found that violent men scored higher than one or both of the non-violent sub-groups on anxious attachment and need for nurturance, two of the sub-scales from their measure of dependency. However, both violent and happily married men scored higher than NVD men on the final sub-scale of the dependency measure, narrow focus on partner, suggesting that both violent and non-violent men are somewhat dependent on their partner. However, violent men scored higher than NVND men on all sub-scales of adult attachment (anxiety over abandonment, avoidance of dependency, and discomfort with closeness), suggesting that violent men's dependency and desire for intimacy or closeness is also associated with anxiety and discomfort with such closeness. NVND men scored significantly lower on all sub-scales of adult attachment, suggesting that NVND men are dependent on their partner (scoring high on 'narrow focus on partner'), but do not feel uncomfortable or anxious about this closeness. Similarly, Neyer (2002) found that dependency was associated with secure attachment. This may suggest, as Hirschfeld et al. (1997, p. 160) commented, that dependency "is not in and of itself pathological", and it may be that problems occur in relationships when dependency is accompanied by anxiety and discomfort with the 'closeness' of the relationship.

Specifically, Murphy et al. (1994) found that violent men scored significantly higher than non-violent men on the 'personal inadequacy' factor that emerged through factor analysis. Two of the highest factor loadings were from dependency sub-scales: lack of social self-confidence and emotional reliance. Lack of social self-confidence as a form of dependency has been described by Gurtman (1992, p. 111) as "highly distressed" and submissive. Emotional reliance is a type of dependency on one specific other person, and has been described as "overly nurturant" (Gurtman 1992, p. 106). This over-reliance on one other person, which is likely to be directed towards an intimate partner, will be disrupted to some degree if the relationship is terminated. Similarly, those who are experiencing lack of social self-confidence, characterized by 'distress', may experience an increase in this distress if their dependency is disrupted, such as when their intimate relationship breaks up.

For the current research, measures of harassment, relationship aggression, jealousy, dependency and attachment were employed. The sample was categorized into three distinct groups: (1) those who never engaged in harassment or who scored only one on the minor harassment sub-scale (non-harassers), (2) those who scored two or more on the minor harassment sub-scale (minor harassers), and (3) those who scored two or more on the severe harassment sub-scale, or who scored one or more on the severe harassment sub-scale along with a score of one or more on the minor harassment sub-scale (severe harassers). Classification of harassment based on two or more acts or harassment events is based on the legal definition of harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act (1997) in England and Wales, where to constitute harassment, a victim must have experienced a 'course of conduct', defined as two or more acts, or the same act or two or more occasions (e.g., Walby and Allen 2004). The cut-off points for minor and severe harassment were in-line with recommendations by the authors' of the scale (Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al. 2000), who created the items on the UPBI and identified the two levels of severity, minor and severe, based on literature review and consideration of stalking acts investigated by the Threat Management Unit (TMU) of the Los Angeles Police Department.

On the basis of the research described, it was predicted that;

1. The harasser sub-groups would be distinguishable from the non-harasser group by their higher scores on: preoccupied and fearful attachment, jealousy, emotional reliance, and lack of social self-confidence from the dependency measure, higher levels of perpetration and victimization of physical and verbal aggression, and higher levels of harassment victimization.
2. The severe harasser sub-group should be distinct from the minor harasser group through higher scores

on: jealousy, preoccupied attachment, perpetration and victimization of both physical and verbal aggression, and through higher harassment victimization scores and higher dependency (specifically emotional reliance and lack of social self-confidence).

3. Dependency (specifically the emotional reliance and lack of social self-confidence sub-scales) will be negatively associated with secure attachment and positively associated with insecure attachment, particularly, preoccupied and fearful.

Method

Participants

There were 177 undergraduate respondents (50 males) from the University of Central Lancashire, Preston, who were recruited after lectures or in the Library and Learning Resource Centre. Ages ranged from 18 to 65 years ($M: 22$ years; $SD: 7.39$). Males mean age was 25 years ($SD: 8.84$), and females mean age was 21 years ($SD: 6.41$). Requirements for participation in the study were that respondents had been involved in an intimate heterosexual relationship that had broken up. The length of the former-intimate relationship ranged from 2 months to 13 years ($M: 20.28$ months; $SD: 22.58$). When reporting who instigated the break-up, 48% of respondents reported that they were the instigators, 24% reported that the partner broke up the relationship, and 27% reported the decision was mutual; 48% of respondents reported that the relationship had broken up more than once before the final break-up, and the number of these break-ups ranged from 1 to 20 ($M: 2.93$; $SD: 3.22$). In total 260 questionnaires were distributed and 177 were completed and returned; therefore, the response rate was 68%.

Measures

Respondents were required to report their own use of physical and verbal aggression, and report if they inflicted injuries on their partner during their intimate relationship. They were also asked to report being the victims of physical or verbal aggression, and sustaining injuries from their partner during their intimate relationship. They were then asked to report their victimization and perpetration of harassment after the relationship had broken up. Finally, participants provided information on their own attachment styles, levels of interpersonal dependency on three sub-scales, and jealousy levels. The terms ‘stalking’ and ‘harassment’ were not used on the questionnaire. Responses were anonymous, and a debriefing sheet with helplines and the researcher’s contact details was provided at the end of the questionnaire.

The Unwanted Pursuit Behaviors Inventory (UPBI) The UPBI (Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al. 2000) was used to measure the occurrence and frequency of harassment after relationship break-up. Participants were required to report their own perpetration of harassment, and their experiences of harassment victimization after the intimate relationship had broken-up, on a 5-point Likert scale ($0 = \text{Never}$, $1 = \text{Rarely [once or twice]}$, $2 = \text{Occasionally [more than twice]}$, $3 = \text{Repeatedly [more than 5 times]}$, $4 = \text{Frequently [more than 10 times]}$). The UPBI can be separated into two sub-scales for minor and severe harassment. Items 1 to 12 represent minor harassment: for example, ‘Send unwanted text messages’. Items 13 to 25 represent severe harassment, and many of these items are criminal acts in their own right: for example, ‘Force sex after break-up’. Scoring this scale involves calculating the mean for overall harassment, by using all items, and/or calculating separate means for minor and severe items. Raw scores can also be calculated; the overall raw harassment scores for perpetration were used to categorize harassment. Reliabilities for the harassment scale were: overall harassment by respondents ($\alpha=0.83$), overall harassment by partners ($\alpha=0.88$), minor harassment by respondents ($\alpha=0.81$), minor harassment by partners ($\alpha=0.85$), severe harassment by respondents ($\alpha=0.86$), and severe harassment by partners ($\alpha=0.86$). Alpha reliabilities show how well items within a scale correlate, and in this way can “be viewed as a kind of construct validation” (Breakwell et al. 2000, p. 190). Significant correlations between harassment perpetration and both fearful ($r=0.18$) and preoccupied ($r=0.16$) attachment (the two attachment styles most widely associated with harassment), and non-significant correlations between harassment perpetration and both secure ($r=-0.04$) and dismissing ($r=-0.01$) attachment are shown here to further establish the validity of the scale.

Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) The Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS: Straus 1979) consists of three sub-scales: physical aggression, verbal aggression, and reasoning, although only responses on the physical and verbal aggression sub-scales were used in analysis, as the reasoning sub-scale is largely a filler scale on the CTS. Respondents’ perpetration of physical aggression and verbal aggression during the intimate relationship was measured on a 5-point Likert scale ($0 = \text{Never}$, $1 = \text{Rarely}$, $2 = \text{Sometimes}$, $3 = \text{Often}$, $4 = \text{Always}$). Respondents were also asked to report, using the same scale, their own experiences of being the victims of physical and verbal aggression whilst the intimate relationship was intact. The Verbal Aggression Sub-Scale consists of items d through to j, although item g (‘Cried’) was not scored, and was only included by Straus (1979, p. 80) because, “respondents became uneasy if there was no place to record this”. This verbal aggression scale consists

of direct verbal aggression as well as direct relational aggression, indicating that a mixture of non-physical forms of aggression are measured using this scale (see Archer and Coyne 2005, for mention of this scale, p. 218). An example of a scored item from this sub scale is, 'Insulted or swore [at the partner or experienced this from partner]'. The Physical Aggression sub-scale consists of items k through to s, and can be separated to identify mild (items k to m: example, 'pushed, grabbed or shoved him/her') and severe (items n to s: example, 'beat him/her up') types of physical aggression. Each of the sub-scales can be scored separately, and the mean for each calculated. For the Physical Aggression sub-scale, an overall mean score can be calculated using items k to s, and/or two separate means can be calculated for the mild and severe forms of physical aggression. Reliabilities for the sub-scales are: verbal aggression by respondents ($\alpha=0.74$), verbal aggression by partners ($\alpha=0.77$), overall physical aggression by respondents ($\alpha=0.79$), and overall physical aggression by partners ($\alpha=0.89$).

The injury scale of the new Conflict Tactics Scale Revised (CTS 2: Straus et al. 1996) was also included and scored. This is a 6-item sub-scale, where respondents' were asked to indicate how often they had inflicted and/or sustained various injuries during the whole of the previous relationship, measured on a 7-point Likert scale (0 = *this has never happened*, 1 = *once*, 2 = *twice*, 3 = *3–5 times*, 4 = *6–10 times*, 5 = *11–20 times*, 6 = *more than 20 times*). An example item is, 'I passed out from being hit on the head by my partner in a fight'. Reliabilities for the injury sub-scales were: injuries inflicted by respondents ($\alpha=0.62$), and injuries inflicted by partners ($\alpha=0.71$).

The Relationship Questionnaire (RQ) Bartholomew and Horowitz's (1991) self-report attachment measure requires participants to read four separate paragraphs, each representing a different attachment style: secure, dismissing, preoccupied and fearful. Participants were asked to report to what extent each paragraph was representative of them, using a continuous 7-point scale (1 = *'Not at all like me'* through to 7 = *'Very much like me'*). This means that each paragraph is representative to varying degrees. Therefore, it is possible that more than one paragraph can be representative of participants' overall attachment styles, for example, a preoccupied/fearful attachment style. The questionnaire was scored by taking the raw scores given for each of the four attachment styles and entering these into all subsequent analyses.

Interpersonal Dependency Inventory (IDI) Interpersonal dependency is measured using the self-report Interpersonal Dependency Inventory (IDI: Hirschfeld et al. 1997). The IDI comprises 3 sub-scales: Emotional Reliance on Another

Person (ER: example; 'Disapproval by someone I care about is very painful to me'), Lack of Social Self-Confidence (LSS: example; 'When I have a decision to make I always ask for advice'), and Assertion of Autonomy (AA: example; 'I don't need other people to make me feel good'). The response format is a 4-point Likert scale (1 = *Very characteristic of me*, 2 = *Quite characteristic of me*, 3 = *Somewhat characteristic of me*, 4 = *Not very characteristic of me*). All items were reverse-scored, except for items 10, 23 and 42. Sub-scales were individually scored, simply by adding the scores (and reverse-scores were necessary) for the items on each sub-scale and finding the mean. An overall dependency score was also calculated by adding scores on all items on all scales, but sub-scales were used in analysis. Reliabilities for the sub-scales were: emotional reliance ($\alpha=0.83$), lack of social self-confidence ($\alpha=0.78$), assertion of autonomy ($\alpha=0.79$). Validity of the sub-scales is shown by their correlations with each other and other variables; for example, ER ($r=-0.25$) had a significant negative relationship, and LSS ($r=-0.13$) had no significant relationship with AA, as would be expected. ER and LSS were significantly correlated with each other ($r=0.48$). Furthermore, assertion of autonomy was most significantly correlated with a dismissing style of attachment ($r=0.52$), emotional reliance with preoccupied attachment ($r=0.41$), and lack of social self-confidence with fearful attachment ($r=0.34$).

Sexual Jealousy Scale (SJS) The current study used Nannini and Meyers' (2000) modified version of deWeerth and Kalma's (1993) Sexual Jealousy Scale (SJS) to establish levels of jealousy in respondents. The scale consists of seven items each referring to a different situation that respondents' should imagine their partner being involved in whilst they were still together. The modification for the scale used by Nannini and Meyers was that each situation involves the partner interacting with a person of the same sex and age as the respondent, and who is unrelated to the respondent. Examples of the items are, 'Laughing and talking with the other person', and 'Holding hands with the other person'. The response format is a continuous 7-point scale (1 = *'Extremely pleased'* through to 7 = *'Extremely upset'*). Scoring for this scale can be dichotomized, so that scores of 4 and above represent jealousy, and scores of 1 to 3 represent those who are not jealous. However, for the current research the overall mean jealousy score, calculated using all seven items, was used in the analysis ($\alpha=0.90$). Validity of the jealousy scale is shown by its correlation with other relevant variables; for example, jealousy is most significantly correlated with preoccupied attachment ($r=0.24$) and physical aggression perpetration ($r=0.24$), and has no significant relationship with secure attachment ($r=0.09$), as would be expected.

Table 1 Mean and standard deviation perpetration and victimization for all behavioral measures, and scores on non-behavioral measures

	Respondents (i.e., perpetration)		Partners (i.e., respondents' victimization)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Harassment (UPBI)	6.72	7.39	10.70	10.73
Physical aggression (CTS)	1.27	2.55	1.60	3.87
Verbal aggression (CTS)	6.92	4.08	7.78	4.72
Jealousy (SJS)	34.91	6.52		
ER (IDI)	41.71	8.53		
LSS (IDI)	30.93	6.87		
AA (IDI)	29.77	6.83		
Secure (RQ)	4.33	1.62		
Dismissing (RQ)	3.73	1.48		
Preoccupied (RQ)	3.37	1.68		
Fearful (RQ)	3.67	1.84		

The following scales were used for measurement: UPBI, 0–4; CTS, 0–4; SJS, 1–7; IDI, 1–4; RQ, 1–7. Possible score ranges for each scale were: UPBI, 0–100; Verbal Aggression sub-scale (CTS), 0–20; Physical Aggression sub-scale (CTS), 0–36; SJS, 7–49; ER sub-scale (IDI), 17–68; LSS sub-scale (IDI), 15–60; AA sub-scale (IDI), 14–56; Each attachment measure (RQ), 1–7

ER Emotional reliance, LSS lack of social self-confidence, AA assertion of autonomy

Results

Descriptives

Respondents ($N=177$) reported their own perpetration and victimization of harassment behavior; the overall response

rate was 68%. Of these, 132 reported engaging in two or more harassment acts, and 148 reported being the victims of post break-up harassment on at least two occasions. The raw data consisted of participants' responses to the dependency, attachment and jealousy measures, as well as responses for themselves and their partners on the behavioral scales investigating relationship aggression and harassment. Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations for these measures.

Data Screening

Some variables were combined due to collinearity at 0.60 or above. For respondent and partner data, mean mild and mean severe physical aggression were highly correlated ($r=0.61$ and $r=0.70$ respectively) and were combined to create overall mean physical aggression variables. Similarly, overall mean physical aggression perpetrated by respondents and injuries inflicted by respondents were correlated ($r=0.64$) and overall physical aggression by partners and injuries sustained by respondents were correlated ($r=0.79$). Therefore, the injury variables were eliminated from the analysis, leaving overall physical aggression reports for the respondents and their partners. A summary of the correlations between variables measured and used in the analysis (all mean scores except the attachment styles which were entered as raw scores) can be seen in Table 2.

Statistical Analysis

To test hypotheses 1 and 2, respondents were initially grouped into three distinct categories based on their self-

Table 2 Bivariate correlations of all variables measured and used in analysis

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Harassment perpetration		0.49**	0.11	0.05	0.13	0.14	0.15	0.21**	0.18**	0.03	-0.04	-0.01	0.16*	0.18*
2. Harassment victimization			0.31**	0.42**	0.26**	0.42**	-0.06	0.03	0.10	0.03	-0.15	0.001	0.03	0.08
3. VA perpetration				0.60**	0.60**	0.29**	0.19*	0.03	-0.02	-0.04	-0.07	-0.06	0.05	0.05
4. VA victimization					0.36**	0.58**	0.04	-0.11	-0.03	0.03	-0.11	0.02	-0.02	0.01
5. PA perpetration						0.35**	0.24**	0.09	0.02	-0.01	-0.09	-0.11	0.13	0.02
6. PA victimization							-0.10	-0.12	0.06	0.08	-0.16*	0.12	-0.03	-0.04
7. Jealousy								0.20**	0.11	-0.11	0.09	-0.18**	0.24**	0.09
8. ER									0.48**	-0.25**	-0.03	-0.27**	0.41**	0.26**
9. LSS										-0.13	-0.22**	-0.11	0.20**	0.34**
10. AA											-0.14	0.52**	-0.16*	0.18*
11. Secure												-0.23**	-0.02	-0.52**
12. Dismissing													-0.36**	0.22**
13. Preoccupied														0.16*
14. Fearful														

VA Verbal aggression, PA physical aggression, ER emotional reliance, LSS lack of social self-confidence, AA assertion of autonomy

* $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$

reported engagement in the harassment behaviors. Respondents who reported never engaging in any harassment behavior, or who scored only one on the minor harassment sub-scale of the UPBI, comprised the non-harasser category (25% of the sample), those who scored two or more on the minor harassment sub-scale of the UPBI comprised the minor harasser category (55% of the sample), and those who scored two or more on the severe harassment sub-scale of the UPBI, or who scored one or more on both the severe and minor harassment sub-scales comprised the severe harasser category (20% of the sample).

Thirteen variables (all mean scores except attachment) were used to predict group membership, as follows: reports of secure, dismissing, preoccupied and fearful attachment styles; jealousy scores; scores on the dependency sub-scales—assertion of autonomy, lack of social self-confidence, and emotional reliance; scores on perpetration and victimization of verbal aggression; perpetration and victimization of overall physical aggression; scores on partners’ perpetration of harassment behavior (i.e., harassment victimization).

Univariate and Multivariate Analyses

Discriminant Function Analysis (DFA) was used to predict membership of the harassment groups depending on responses to the behavioral and dispositional measures. DFA was chosen as it allowed all variables to be investigated together to assess which were most associated with the varying levels of harassment acts. Means and Univariate Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results are presented in Table 3. A number of predictors were significantly different across the groups, these were: preoccupied attachment score, emotional reliance score, jealousy score, verbal aggression

victimization (i.e., partners’ use of verbal aggression), physical aggression perpetration by respondents, and harassment victimization (i.e., partners’ perpetration of harassment).

Scheffe’s Post Hoc Tests revealed that the severe harasser group scored significantly higher than both minor and non-harassers on preoccupied attachment, emotional reliance, and harassment victimization, although the minor and non-harassers groups did not differ significantly on their responses to these measures. Both minor and severe harassers scored significantly higher than non-harassers on jealousy, although there was no significant difference between minor and severe harassers on the jealousy measure. Severe harassers reported perpetrating significantly more physical aggression than non-harassers, and this difference approached significance between minor and severe harassers; minor and non-harasser groups did not differ significantly on perpetration of physical aggression. Severe harassers scored significantly higher than minor harassers on verbal aggression victimization. There were no significant differences on this measure when comparing minor and non-harassers, or severe harassers and non-harassers.

Two functions were produced by the DFA. The first function consisted of negative behaviors and experiences (such as verbal and physical aggression perpetration, and victimization of harassment and physical aggression), and dispositions (such as preoccupied attachment and lack of social self-confidence) displayed by the respondents, and was therefore labeled ‘Unstable’. The second function consisted of a range of variables: secure and fearful attachment, jealousy, and low scores on assertion of autonomy. This function was therefore labeled ‘Uncertain’. A complete representation of variables significantly correlated with each function can be seen in Table 4. The Unstable function

Table 3 Mean (and standard deviation) response for each of the measures for all harassment categories

	Non-harassers		Minor harassers		Severe harassers		Univariate <i>F</i> ratio <i>df</i> = 2, 173
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Secure	4.18	1.66	4.46	1.56	4.17	1.74	0.67
Dismissing	3.78	1.51	3.85	1.47	3.29	1.45	1.95
Preoccupied	3.07	1.60	3.28	1.61	4.09	1.77	4.22*
Fearful	3.13	1.71	3.82	1.84	4.03	1.87	2.98
Jealousy	4.61	0.97	5.06	0.93	5.24	0.81	5.34**
ER	2.35	0.49	2.42	0.46	2.69	0.54	5.38**
LSS	1.95	0.52	2.06	0.41	2.19	0.49	2.75
AA	2.16	0.49	2.10	0.46	2.13	0.57	0.23
VA perpetration	0.99	0.66	1.15	0.68	1.37	0.66	3.05
VA victimization	1.30	0.92	1.18	0.70	1.59	0.79	3.46*
PA perpetration	0.08	0.17	0.13	0.24	0.26	0.45	4.34*
PA victimization	0.17	0.43	0.12	0.35	0.33	0.58	3.04
Harassment victimization	0.35	0.43	0.36	0.30	0.71	0.60	10.65**

VA Verbal aggression, PA physical aggression, ER emotional reliance, LSS lack of social self-confidence, AA assertion of autonomy
p*<0.05, *p*<0.01

Table 4 Most significant correlations of predictor variables with the discriminant functions

	Correlations of predictors with discriminant functions	
	Unstable	Uncertain
Harassment victimization	0.65	
Emotional reliance	0.48	
PA perpetration	0.42	
Preoccupied attachment	0.42	
VA perpetration	0.34	
Lack of social self-confidence	0.32	
VA victimization	0.32	
PA victimization	0.31	
Dismissing attachment	-0.26	
Jealousy		0.45
Fearful attachment		0.37
Secure attachment		0.23
Assertion of autonomy		-0.14
Canonical R2	68.3	31.7
Eigenvalue	0.28	0.13

PA Physical aggression, VA verbal aggression

explained 68% of the variance between the groups, and the Uncertain function explained 32% of the variance.

The classification of cases is shown in Table 5; cases were grouped into non-, minor, and severe harassers based on the responses to predictor variables. In total, 61% of cases were correctly classified. Group membership was correctly predicted for non-harassers in 24% of cases, but only at chance level (26%), for minor harassers in 85% of cases (55% by chance), and for severe harassers in 40% of cases (20% by chance).

Dependency and Attachment

To test Hypothesis 3, the correlations in Table 2 were examined to investigate the relationship between each of the dependency sub-scales and the attachment styles. The vast majority of the sample reporting on dependency and attachment had engaged in at least two acts of harassment behavior (75% of the sample). As expected, secure attachment was negatively associated with all measures of dependency, and this relationship was significant for secure

attachment and lack of social self-confidence ($r=-0.22, p<0.01$). Emotional reliance was significantly and positively associated with preoccupied ($r=0.41, p<0.01$) and fearful attachment ($r=0.26, p<0.01$), as predicted. Lack of social self-confidence was also significantly and positively associated with preoccupied ($r=0.20, p<0.01$) and fearful attachment ($r=0.34, p<0.01$), as predicted.

Discussion

The study aim was to investigate whether different degrees or levels of harassment could be predicted by responses on a number of behavioral and dispositional measures. In many ways, the current findings support previous research that has focused on one or two of the variables investigated in this study (jealousy, attachment, dependency, and aggression), but not all together. Evidence of more perpetration of physical aggression during their relationship for severe harassers than both minor and non-harassers in this study supports a relatively large body of research associating 'domestic violence' and former-intimate stalking (e.g., Coleman 1997; Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al. 2000).

The current study also found more experience of being harassed and verbally victimized for harassers (particularly the severe harasser group) than the other groups. Harassment victimization distinguished severe harassers from both minor and non-harassers, and verbal victimization experiences separated severe harassers from minor harassers in the current sample. This implies a degree of mutuality in harassment situations (see Langhinrichsen-Rohling 2006): i.e., severe harassers in the current sample reported that their ex-partner had perpetrated some form of harassment act(s) against them after the relationship break-up. The mutuality of harassment behavior may be underpinned by the same processes that underlie mutual aggression in relationships (e.g., Straus and Ramirez 2002). Both partners may engage in harassment behavior after the break-up of their relationship for a number of reasons; perhaps they remain interested in each others lives and whereabouts after break-up, or they may both wish to seek revenge after a particularly negative relationship, for perceived or actual wrongdoings whilst the relationship was intact. It should be noted that the gender split of the sample was not equal (50

Table 5 Classification results for discriminant function analysis

	Actual group	No. of cases. (prior <i>p</i>)	Group membership		
			Non-harassers	Minor harassers	Severe harassers
Group 1 non-harassers		45 (25.6%)	11 (24.4%)	8 (8.3%)	0 (0.0%)
Group 2 minor harassers		96 (54.5%)	31 (68.9%)	82 (85.4%)	21 (60.0%)
Group 3 severe harassers		35 (19.9%)	3 (6.7%)	6 (6.3%)	14 (40.0%)
Original grouped cases correctly identified: 60.8%					

males and 127 females), and an equal split would be preferable for future research. Participants were only asked to respond regarding a heterosexual former-intimate relationship. And no note was made of the type of this relationship (marital, cohabiting or dating). Future research should consider this relevant background information.

The role of jealousy, particularly in former-intimate harassment, has been found to play an important part in the initiation and development of harassment behavior. Jealousy has been found to be present in a relationship prior to engagement in harassment, or to occur alongside harassment behavior. Daly and Wilson (1988) and Buss (2000) have reported that jealousy, or the threat of separation, is the primary cause of aggression or violent behavior in intimate relationships (specifically for male-on-female violence) and the behavioral expression of jealousy can be successful in preventing the romantic partner from terminating the relationship. In a female undergraduate sample that had experienced former-intimate stalking, more than half also experienced jealousy from their partner. And jealousy was a significant predictor of violent former-intimate stalking (Roberts 2005). The current study is consistent with such research; jealousy scores were higher for the harasser sub-groups than for the non-harasser group.

Meloy (1992, 1996) initially proposed that stalking was a disorder of attachment, or that stalking developed as a result of a pathology of attachment. Vormbrock (1993) suggested that attachment theory may be particularly useful in investigating separation or break-up of intimate partners and their ability to cope with this, and suggested that adults react to these types of long term separation in very similar ways to children when separated from their caregivers. The insecure partner may try a variety of actions to maintain proximity to their intimate or recently departed partner. Results from the current study suggest that this may be the case; significantly higher scores on preoccupied attachment characterized both the minor and severe harassers, in comparison to those who never engaged in harassment after break-up. And the highest scores on preoccupied attachment were found for severe harassers. Preoccupied attachment is characterized by anxiety about the attachment relationship, and experiences of inconsistent interactions with the attachment figure are thought to contribute to this style of attachment. Through these experiences, those with preoccupied attachment have learned to express their needs in an active way, and are persistent in their attempts to gain the support of the other (Kienlen 1998); harassment or stalking may be a way to achieve this. Further, Barbara and Dion (2000, p. 336) reported that preoccupied individuals lack the resources to cope with the break-up, and “the negative nature of their mental models of self prevents any buffer against extreme distress”. A dyadic approach to attachment in former-intimate harassment situations would be useful in the future.

Emotional reliance, a sub-scale from the interpersonal dependency measure, also discriminated group membership in the current study. This result suggests that those who engage in harassment acts or events are more dependent on their ex-partner than those who do not engage in harassment. There is very limited research focusing on dependency/emotional reliance and harassment. The pattern of results, however, supports a number of studies that have focused on the role of dependency in relationship violence. Some researchers have identified high dependency and violence in intimate relationships as being linked (e.g., Buttell et al. 2005; Murphy et al. 1994), and the current research findings are consistent with this. However, Holtzworth-Munroe et al. (1997) have found similar dependency scores for non-violent and violent married men. However, violent men reported being uncomfortable with their own dependency, and evidenced insecure patterns of attachment (specifically preoccupied or fearful styles); non-violent married men did not report insecure attachment patterns or discomfort with dependency. Ryan et al. (2005) have shown that higher levels of emotional reliance are associated with greater mental health and well-being, which provides some explanation of why non-violent men may be dependent in a ‘healthy’ way (i.e., their emotional reliance is likely not linked with insecure patterns of attachment). In contrast, the harasser groups in the current study scored higher on both preoccupied attachment, *and* on emotional reliance than the non-harasser group.

Research that has focused on dependency and relationship aggression has mainly used either a total score from the IDI (e.g., Buttell et al. 2005), or has focused more on spouse-specific dependency (which has three sub-scales; narrow focus on spouse, high need for nurturance, and anxious attachment: e.g., Holtzworth-Munroe et al. 1997). Murphy et al. (1994) included the IDI as a measure of interpersonal dependency, as well as a spouse-specific dependency measure. However, their main analysis included the total score on the IDI (as did Buttell et al. 2005), from which they concluded that partner abusive men scored higher on overall interpersonal dependency. Their next analysis involved entering the sub-scales from the IDI, along with measures of spouse specific dependency, esteem, and jealousy, into a factor analysis; partner assaultive men scored significantly higher than the non-violent groups on the personal inadequacy factor, on which emotional reliance and lack of social self-confidence were two of the highest loading scales.

To further the understanding of dependency and aggressive behaviors, the current study examined the three dimensions of the IDI separately in relation to harassment behavior in all analyses conducted. The emotional reliance sub-scale is particularly concerned with a person’s dependency to one specific other person, while the lack of social

self-confidence sub-scale focuses on dependency on people in general. In the current research, both of these sub-types of interpersonal dependency have high factor loadings on the Unstable factor, which significantly discriminates severe harassers from the other groups. Assertion of autonomy is really the opposite of the other two sub-scales, measuring indifference to relationships with others or independence, and did not correlate with anxiety or depression in the original research by Hirschfeld et al. (1997).

The descriptions given to the emotional reliance and lack of social self-confidence sub-scales by Gurtman (1992) show that they can be related to harassment behavior. Those who are emotionally reliant are described by Gurtman (1992, p. 106) as “overly-nurturant” and affectionate. This intense dependency on a single other person will clearly be severely damaged on relationship break-up, potentially resulting in harassment behavior to re-establish the relationship (and gain back the partner to depend on), or to seek revenge for the ‘abandonment’ and withdrawal of the figure to depend on. Gurtman (1992, p. 111) described the lack of social self-confidence dependency sub-scale as non-assertive, submissive and “highly distressed”. Those who score high on this sub-scale may attempt to gain some control over the break-up situation through engaging in harassment behavior. Or, the separation itself may increase their pre-disposition to distress, and the harassment behavior may be a manifestation of this distress and anxiety. Finally, Gurtman (1992, p. 109) described the assertion of autonomy sub-scale as vindictive, cold and containing “little interpersonal content”. It is, therefore, not surprising that assertion of autonomy does not characterize former-intimate harassers, as they have been invested to some degree in the relationship, and many harass after break-up in an attempt to re-establish this relationship. Murphy et al. (1994, p. 729) reported that dependency may “predispose some men [sic] to appraise interpersonal conflicts...as extremely threatening to emotional security and well-being, motivating attempts to control the partner through coercion and violence”. Dependency, specifically emotional reliance or lack of social self-confidence, may well be the underlying disposition that manifests itself in relationship aggression and harassment behavior, should the dependent partner not receive the level of attention that they desire.

When all predictor variables were investigated, they could be sorted in order of their distinct ability to differentiate between the groups. Two functions were identified: an Unstable function and an Uncertain function. The Unstable function was most important in discerning between the groups, and a positive correlation with harassment victimization (i.e., respondents’ experiences of being harassed by their partners) was the most important distinguishing measure in this function. The other measures in this function (all positive correlations unless stated

otherwise), ranging from most to least important were: emotional reliance, physical aggression perpetration, preoccupied attachment, verbal aggression perpetration, lack of social self-confidence, verbal aggression victimization, physical aggression victimization, and dismissing attachment (a negative correlation). This function accounted for 68% of the variance. The most important measure in distinguishing between groups on the second function, the Uncertain function, was jealousy, followed by fearful attachment, secure attachment, and assertion of autonomy (a negative correlation). The second function accounted for 32% of the variance.

The two functions differ between groups. The Unstable function significantly distinguishes the severe harassers, who score higher on this function, from the minor and non-harassers, which is unsurprising as the Unstable function is characterized by a number of negative behaviors and dispositions. The Uncertain function differentiates the non- and severe harasser groups from the minor harasser group, who score higher on this function, although not significantly. Group membership for the minor harassers was best predicted in the current study. This membership was correctly identified in 85% of cases (55% by chance). Membership of the severe harasser group was correctly predicted in 40% of cases (20% by chance). Group membership of the non-harasser group was least well predicted with 24% of cases correctly classified, i.e., only at chance level (26%).

This suggests that both minor and severe harassers are categorized well, and that the behavioral and dispositional variables entered into the analysis are capable of distinguishing between the sub-groups of harassers. Emotional reliance differentiated severe harassers, who scored higher on this type of dependency, from both other groups. And Gurtman (1992, p. 111), who investigated the construct validity of the IDI, reported that emotional reliance and lack of social self-confidence as two types of dependency were likely to “evoke qualitatively different kinds of interpersonal responses”. As there is no significant difference across groups on lack of social self-confidence, it is suggested that the behavioral reaction (i.e., perpetration of *severe* harassment) of those who score high on emotional reliance (ER) may indicate that ER is one of the main variables that makes severe harassers qualitatively different from minor and non-harassers. Similarly, severe harassers were significantly more likely than minor or non-harassers to have preoccupied attachment, characterized by a positive model of others (which relates to the high dependency or ‘emotional reliance’ on the intimate partner) and a negative view of the self. This may suggest that severe harassers are qualitatively different to minor and non-harassers, possibly because of their highly sensitive appraisals of threatening or stressful events, such as a relationship termination. In addition to high dependency

and insecure attachment, severe harassers also report experiencing significantly more harassment victimization than the minor and non-harassers, resulting in severe harassers over-dependence and poor quality attachment to a person who is potentially victimizing them.

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