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Chan, Heng Choon

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**Perceptions of Stalking in Mainland China:
Behaviors, Motives, and Effective Coping Strategies**

Heng Choon (Oliver) Chan

Teaching Laboratory for Forensics and Criminology, Department of Social and Behavioral
Sciences, City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, SAR

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Keywords: Mainland China, motive, perceptions, psychosocial characteristic, stalker, stalking, victimization, victim coping

Correspondence:

Heng Choon (Oliver) Chan, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Criminology, Teaching Laboratory for Forensics and Criminology, Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences, City University of Hong Kong, Kowloon, Hong Kong, S.A.R. Tel: (+852) 3442-9223.
E-mail: oliverchan.ss@cityu.edu.hk (corresponding author)

Perceptions of Stalking in Mainland China:
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Abstract

There is limited information available on the phenomenon of stalking in the Asian context, especially in mainland China. This study investigated individuals' perceptions of stalking behavior, the motives of stalkers, and the effective strategies for coping with stalking victimization in a sample of 985 young adults (aged 18–33 years) from Liaoning province in mainland China. The influence of specific demographic (i.e., age, sex, religiosity, and education) and psychosocial (i.e., social bonds and self-control) characteristics on individuals' perceptions of effective coping strategies for stalking victimization were also examined. In general, men and women held significantly different perceptions of stalking behavior, stalkers' motives, and strategies that were considered effective for coping with stalking. Multivariate analyses indicated that a low educational level was significantly associated with the perception that avoidant tactics constituted an effective strategy for coping with stalking victimization. Moreover, individuals with lower educational levels and stronger social bonds tended to perceive proactive and aggressive tactics to constitute an effective strategy for coping with stalking victimization. Finally, individuals with lower self-control tended to endorse compliance tactics when coping with stalking victimization. In view of the devastating nature and consequences of stalking, the findings of this study highlight the need for anti-stalking legislation in mainland China.

Keywords: Mainland China, motive, perceptions, psychosocial characteristic, stalker, stalking, victimization, victim coping

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Behaviors, Motives, and Effective Coping Strategies

1| INTRODUCTION

Stalking is a global public health concern that impacts many people each year. Stalking is considered an old behavior, but a new crime (Meloy, 1999). Stalking is difficult to define, and has been defined in several ways, such as by strict legal definitions that require the stalker to demonstrate intent and the victim to feel fear, or by broader definitions that include lists of constituent behavior (Jordan, Wilcox, & Pritchard, 2007; Pereira, Matos, Sheridan, & Scott, 2015; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). In general, stalking encompasses a wide range of behaviors, ranging from mere harassment (e.g., text messages, standing outside the victim's school, house, or workplace) to life-threatening behaviors (e.g., threats to injure or kill the victim) (Chan & Sheridan, 2020a; Wood & Stichman, 2018). Several large-scale questionnaire surveys report a relatively high prevalence of victimization from stalking. For instance, 1 in 5 females and 1 in 12 males in Australia have experienced at least one incident of stalking in their lifetime (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016); the corresponding statistics for the United States (the U.S.) and the United Kingdom (the U.K.) are 1 in 6 females and 1 in 19 males (Breiding, Smith, Basile, Walters, Chen, & Merrick, 2014), and 1 in 5 females and 1 in 18 males (Home Office, 2011), respectively.

Recent studies have demonstrated that stalking incidents are not uncommon and potentially occur in every country (Chan & Sheridan, 2020a; Sheridan, Arianayagam, & Chan, 2019; Sheridan, Scott, & Roberts, 2016). Empirical investigations conducted in understudied populations (e.g., Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ghana, Hong Kong, Lithuania, Mainland China, the Netherlands, Portugal, South Africa, Singapore, and Spain) report incidence rates of stalking victimization that range from 5% to 55% (Chan & Sheridan, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c,

2021a; Chan, Sheridan, & Adjorlolo, 2020; Sheridan, Arianayagam, & Chan, 2019; Sheridan, Scott, & Roberts, 2016). According to the few studies that have investigated the dynamics of stalking perpetration, the most frequently reported perpetrators of stalking (or “stalkers”) are the victims’ ex-intimate partners (49–81%), followed by their acquaintances (13–22.5%), and strangers (10–18%) (Chan & Sheridan, 2021b; Mohandie, Meloy, McGowan, & Williams, 2006; Spitzberg, 2002; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). Most stalkers who are ex-intimate partners are motivated by the need to control the victim or by a desire to restart a relationship with the victim, whereas stalkers who are acquaintances are more likely to be motivated by the victim’s attractiveness (Chan & Sheridan, 2021b; Logan & Walker, 2009; Roberts & Dziegielewski, 1996). In contrast, most stalkers who are strangers are motivated by a desire to harass or harm the victim (e.g., victim intimidation) (Chan & Sheridan, 2021b; Spitzberg & Cupach, 2007).

Numerous studies show that victims of stalking are often impacted by a wide array of psychological, physical, social, occupational, and financial costs (Spitzberg & Cupach, 2007). Victims of stalking may suffer from a range of deleterious psychological effects. For instance, they may become more anxious, distrustful or suspicious, fearful, nervous, angry, paranoid, depressed, and aggressive (Amar, 2006; Blaauw, Winkel, Arensman, Sheridan, & Freeve, 2002; Brewster, 1997; Kraaij, Arensman, Garnefski, & Kremers, 2007). A victim’s risk of experiencing psychological, social, and physical harm from stalking increases the longer they are subjected to stalking behaviors; it is also influenced by the type of coping strategy that they adopt (Chan & Sheridan, 2020c). Coping generally refers to the cognitive and behavioral efforts employed by a victim to minimize, master, or tolerate internal and external demands that are the outcomes of stressful events. Coping strategies can either be emotion-focused (i.e., taking steps to minimize the distress triggered by a stressor) or problem-focused (i.e., taking steps to avoid or remove the stressful experience, or to reduce its impact if it cannot be avoided) (Carver & Connor-Smith, 2010; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Various types of strategies for coping with stalking have been proposed (Cupach & Spitzberg, 2000; Nicastro, Cousins, & Spitzberg, 2000; Spitzberg, Nicastro, & Cousins, 1998). Among these, the five coping strategies proposed by Cupach and Spitzberg (2004) appear to be the most widely discussed. These include (1) strategies to move inward or “avoidant strategies” (e.g., whereby a victim attempts to deny, distract herself from, or redefine the stalker’s behavior), (2) strategies to move outward or “proactive strategies” (e.g., whereby a victim consults with or seeks support from a third party as a means to deter or avoid the stalker), (3) strategies to move away or “passive strategies” (e.g., whereby a victim attempts to avoid the stalker by altering her daily routine), (4) strategies to move toward or with the stalker or “compliance strategies” [e.g., whereby the victim engages in discursive efforts to frame any interaction with the stalker in either a positive (“persuading”) or negative (“threatening”) manner], and (5) strategies to move against the stalker or “aggressive strategies” (e.g., whereby the victim actively defends herself against stalking, with the intention to cause harm to the stalker). Across different studies, the tactics that are commonly used by victims to cope with stalking include ignoring the stalker, confronting the stalker, altering their schedules so as to physically avoid the stalker, and carrying a spray weapon (Bjerregaard, 2000; Fremouw, Westrup, & Pennypacker, 1997; Podaná & Imříšková, 2016). Regardless of the type of coping strategy adopted, most victims of stalking attempt to address their victimization themselves, as opposed to seeking formal assistance (Amar, 2006; Bjerregaard, 2000; Björklund, Hakkanen-Nyholm, Sheridan, & Roberts, 2010; Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2002; Fremouw, Westrup, & Pennypacker, 1997; Podaná, & Imříšková, 2016).

In addition to the research on the experiences of individuals who are the perpetrators or victims of stalking, a considerable number of studies on stalking have focused on individuals’ perceptions of stalking. Research in this area has primarily sought to identify and characterize behavior that the general public regards as stalking behavior (Cass, 2011; Chung & Sheridan,

2021a, 2021b; Chan & Sheridan, 2020b; Chan, Sheridan, & Adjorlolo, 2020; Dennison & Thomson, 2022; Finnegan & Fritz, 2012; Scott & Sheridan, 2011; Scott, Rajakaruna, Sheridan, & Sleath, 2014; Sheridan & Davies, 2001; Sheridan & Scott, 2010; Sheridan, Arianayagam, & Chan, 2019; Sheridan, Gillett, & Davies, 2002; Spitzberg & Veksler, 2007; Villacampa & Pujols, 2021; Yanowitz, 2006). Such research on public perceptions of stalking is needed to better gauge the extent to which members of the public are aware of the nature and consequences of stalking incidents. Moreover, it can also help to address misconceptions that the public may possess about stalking behavior that would otherwise result in a lack of demand for policy and social change. This issue is especially relevant to jurisdictions that have yet to introduce legislation against stalking behavior, such as mainland China. At present, most stalking-related offenses in mainland China are dealt with via the issuance of restraining orders, as most cases appear to occur in a domestic context (e.g., cases involving ex-spouses or ex-boyfriends/girlfriends). As such, the current criminal justice system arguably possesses insufficient capacity to adequately address the severity of stalking incidents. In this study, a large sample of young male and female adults in mainland China were recruited to investigate their perceptions of stalking behavior, the motives of stalkers, and the effective coping strategies used by victims of stalking.

Thus far, the only study on the perceptions of stalking among individuals from mainland China is a study by Chan and Sheridan (2020b). However, because their sample of 546 mainland Chinese consisted of participants who were recruited while studying at universities in Hong Kong, acculturation may have influenced the results. Specifically, the acculturation of these participants from mainland China to the way of life in Hong Kong may have resulted in their psychological adaptation to the local culture and lifestyle (Tartakovsky, 2007; Yu, Stewart, Liu, & Lam, 2014), and thus limited the potential for this sample to be representative of the perceptions of mainland Chinese. Chan and Sheridan (2020b) reported

that a significantly larger proportion of mainland Chinese participants than Hong Kong participants (of which there were 1,846 in total) deemed the following intrusive activities to constitute stalking: making the victim fearful for her/his safety or life (95.8% vs. 90.9%), threatening to harm or kill the victim (93.6% vs. 90.7%), vandalizing the victim's property or damaging something the victim valued (88.1% vs. 81.4%), and sending unsolicited or harassing emails to the victim (86.8% vs. 83.4%). In addition, a significantly larger proportion of mainland Chinese than Hong Kong participants considered stalkers to be motivated by perceptions that their victims represent convenient or proximal targets (33.2% vs. 25.1%), or by the different cultural beliefs or backgrounds of their victims (17.0% vs. 13.7%). A significantly larger proportion of mainland Chinese participants also considered avoidant tactics (e.g., seeking meaning in the context of stalking, minimizing the problem, or seeking therapy), proactive tactics (e.g., seeking input from legal parties or members of law enforcement, engaging the direct involvement of others, and engaging in social support), and compliance tactics (e.g., using problem-solving negotiation with the stalker, negotiating the definition of the relationship with the stalker, or using nonverbal aggression against the stalker) to be effective means for overcoming their stalking victimization.

1.1| Sex and stalking behavior

Although stalking is a sex-neutral offense, most victims of stalking are women (over 80%) and most stalkers are men (over 70%) (Pathé, Mullen, & Purcell, 2000; Spitzberg, 2002). Recent studies have overwhelmingly demonstrated that stalking a member of the opposite sex is the most prevalent type of stalking (Chan & Sheridan, 2020b, 2020c; Chan, Sheridan, & Adjorlolo, 2020). Nonetheless, stalking a member of the same sex is not uncommon (Meloy & Boyd, 2003; Pathé, Mullen, & Purcell, 2000; Purcell, Pathé, & Mullen, 2010; Strand & McEwan, 2011). Englebrecht and Reyns (2011) have observed that men are less likely to self-identify as victims of stalking and to report their victimization to the police. Nevertheless, these factors do

not necessarily suffice to characterize the overall pattern of stalking. Logan (2022) as well as Nicastro and colleagues assert that sex differences between the stalkers and victims are more apparent when all subtypes of stalking are considered, and especially when stalking involving ex-intimate partners is examined in isolation (Nicastro, Cousins, & Spitzberg, 2000). In general, the most violent type of stalking is that where the stalker is an ex-intimate partner of the victim (McEwan, Daffern, MacKenzie, & Ogloff, 2017; Senkans, McEwan, & Ogloff, 2021). Chan (2021a) has found that male and female stalkers in Hong Kong are primarily motivated by the victim's attractiveness, followed by a desire to maintain a romantic relationship with the victim. In general, the most frequently reported experience of victimization across all male and female victims of stalking is being the subject of surveillance-oriented activities (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2002). Nonetheless, recent studies on stalkers (Boisvert, Wells, Armstrong, Lewis, Woeckener, & Nobles, 2020; Chan, 2021a; Rothman, Bahrami, Okeke, & Mumford, 2021) as well as the victims of stalking (Chan & Sheridan, 2020c, 2021b; Chan, Sheridan, & Adjorlolo, 2020; Logan, 2020; Wood & Stichman, 2018) have documented differences in the behaviors of men and women.

Multiple studies have documented sex differences in the perceptions of stalking behavior. For instance, surveying members of the general public as well as police officers in an Australian community, McKeon and colleagues (2015) found that men more strongly endorsed problematic notions of stalking than women. Yanowitz's (2006) study of a college sample in the U.S. reported that women considered a larger number of activities to constitute stalking behavior than men, irrespective of individuals' personal experiences with stalking. Similarly, examining a sample of college students in the U.S., Lambert and colleagues observed that female participants were more likely than male participants to judge that stalking occurred frequently and was harmful to the victims, again regardless of their personal experiences of being the victims of stalking (Lambert, Smith, Geistman, Cluse-Tolar, & Jiang, 2013). In a

recent study of a large sample of 2,496 young adults in Hong Kong, Chan and Sheridan (2020b) observed that significantly more women than men judged a range of intrusive activities (e.g., making the victim fear for their safety or life, threatening to harm or kill the victim, and following or spying on the victim) to constitute stalking. Likewise, studying a sample of 371 university students in Ghana, Chan and colleagues found that female and male participants considered different types of intrusive activities to constitute stalking (Chan, Sheridan, & Adjorlolo, 2020). For instance, significantly more female participants considered “harming the victim physically,” “trespassing on the victim’s property,” and “leaving unwanted items for the victim to find” to be examples of stalking, while significantly more male participants considered “following the victim,” “sending the victim unwanted written communications,” and “repeatedly asking the victim for information” to constitute stalking.

With regard to public perceptions of the motives of stalkers, Chan and Sheridan (2020b) noted that significantly more men perceived stalkers to be motivated either by a belief that their victims “enjoy the attention” or by their different cultural beliefs or backgrounds from their victims. In contrast, women tended to believe that stalkers are primarily motivated by their victims being convenient targets. The same study, which focused on adults in Hong Kong, also found that significantly more women considered proactive tactics (e.g., seeking input from legal parties or members of law enforcement, or engaging the direct involvement of other parties) and passive tactics (e.g., physically distancing from the stalker and behaving cautiously) to be effective strategies for coping with stalking victimization. In comparison, significantly more men perceived compliance tactics (e.g., accepting promises from or deceiving the stalker) to represent effective strategies for coping with stalking victimization (Chan & Sheridan, 2020b). Nonetheless, several studies did not observe any sex differences in individuals’ perceptions of stalking behaviors (Cass, 2011; Kinkade, Burns, & Fuentes, 2005; Sheridan, Gillett, & Davies, 2002; Spitzberg & Veksler, 2007).

1.2| Self-control, social bonds, and stalking behavior

The limited literature on self-control, social bonds, and stalking behavior has revealed that they are strongly related. In a broad sense, self-control is a manifestation of an individual's capacity to self-regulate. According to Hirschi and Gottfredson (1994), once self-control is formed during childhood, it is arguably stable over the lifespan. Individuals with low self-control have a higher tendency to pursue easy and immediate gratification, with little consideration for the potential consequences of their behaviors or actions. They tend to be "impulsive, insensitive, physical (as opposed to mental), risk-taking, short-sighted, and non-verbal" (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990, p. 90). Studies have shown that both stalkers and their victims tend to have relatively low levels of self-control (Chan, 2019; Piquero, MacDonald, Dobrin, Daigle, & Cullen, 2005; Reisig, Pratt, & Holtfreter, 2009). In their study of stalking victimization among women, Fox and colleagues suggested that women with lower self-control could be more likely to place themselves in risky situations, thereby increasing their exposure to potential stalkers and their probability of being in intimate relationships with partners who were controlling (Fox, Gover, & Kaukinen, 2009). Conversely, Fox and colleagues later found that low self-control significantly increased the risk of stalking victimization only among males (Fox, Nobles, & Fisher, 2014). They suggested that this finding could relate to traditional gender norms and expectations relating to risky behavior. However, Chan and Sheridan (2021a) failed to find any significant effect of self-control on stalking victimization in a sample of young adults in Hong Kong.

According to social control theory (also known as "social bonding theory"), social bonds consist of four key elements. These include attachment (e.g., affective or emotional ties with one's parents, peers, and school), commitment (i.e., one's investment in conventional behavior), involvement (i.e., one's active participation in prosocial activities), and belief (i.e., one's respect for the moral validity of societal norms and regulations) (Hirschi, 1969).

According to this theory, individuals with strong social bonds (or attachment) with their parents, prosocial peers, school, and conventional society are less inclined to engage in delinquent and criminal activities. Hence, they tend to experience a lower risk of victimization, partly due to their reduced exposure to deviant peers, risky routine activities, and lifestyle choices, and also due to their greater exposure to effective guardianship (Felson, 1986; Schreck, Fisher, & Millers, 2004). Conversely, individuals with a low level of social bonding, in general, are more prone to being involved in deviant and criminal activities (Chan, 2021b). Although the constructs of social bonding have been extensively studied in the context of delinquent and criminal perpetration and victimization (Chan & Chui, 2015; Hoeve, Stams, van der Put, Dubas, van der Laan, & Gerris, 2012), Chan and Sheridan's (2021a) study did not find any significant effect of social bonding on stalking victimization.

2| THE PRESENT STUDY

Mainland China, also commonly referred to as the People's Republic of China (PRC), is the most populated country in the world, with a population of 1.411 billion in 2020 (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2021). Mainland China consists of 31 provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities, and includes Hong Kong and Macau as special administrative regions. Based on the 2020 census, a large majority of the population is Han-Chinese (91.11%). The remaining 8.89% consists of 55 minority ethnic groups (e.g., Zhuang, Hui, Manchu, Uyghur, Miao, Yi, Tujia, Tibetan, and Mongol); most of these are concentrated in the areas that makeup the country's northwest, north, northeast, south, and southwest borders. Nevertheless, some minorities reside in the central interior areas of the mainland. In general, Chinese mainlanders largely adhere to traditional Chinese teachings and cultural values,¹

¹ Traditional Chinese culture, shaped by a tradition of 4,000 years of history and maintained by a common language, provides Chinese mainlanders with their basic identity. This cultural value system distinguishes it from other cultures, particularly Western cultures. Traditional Chinese culture comprises diverse and often competing schools of thought, including Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. For instance, Confucianism, which generally forms the foundation of Chinese cultural tradition, stresses human relationships, social structures, virtuous behavior, and work ethics (Pye, 1972). The basic teaching of Confucius focuses on the Five Constant Virtues (i.e.,

although in recent decades Westernized beliefs and practices adopted during modernization are commonly found in some megacities (e.g., Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen).

In this study, stalking is defined as “a series of acts directed at a specific person that, taken together over a period of time, cause him (or her) to feel harassed, alarmed, or distressed” (after The Law Reform Commission of Hong Kong, 2000). Given this context, this study makes two important contributions. First, it is among the first to investigate individuals’ perceptions of the motives of stalkers and the experiences of victims in a large sample of postsecondary-educated young adults (including men and women) recruited in mainland China. Specifically, this study explores the sex distribution among individuals’ perceptions of stalking behavior, the motives of stalkers, and the effective strategies for coping with stalking victimization. There is a need to investigate these relationships, as previous studies of non-Western populations indicate that men and women may differ in their perceptions of stalking (e.g., Chan & Lorraine, 2020b; Chan et al., 2020; Sheridan et al., 2016). Second, this study also aims to examine the associations between individuals’ demographic (i.e., age, sex, religiosity, and education) and psychosocial (i.e., social bonds and self-control) characteristics and their perceptions concerning the effectiveness of different strategies for coping with stalking victimization. This study hypothesizes that demographic and psychosocial characteristics will influence the participants’ perception of strategies that are considered effective. Given the paucity of existing empirical evidence, particularly from a non-Western context, no directional hypothesis is proposed.

2.1| Method

2.1.1| Participants and procedure

humanity, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and faithfulness), which further define five basic human relations and principles for each relation (i.e., loyalty and duty, love and obedience, obligation and submission, seniority and modeling subject, and trust; Ch’en, 1986). Thus, under traditional Chinese culture, relationships are structured to ensure a harmonious society, and filial piety and loyalty are emphasized as the most important virtues.

Ethical approval was obtained from the author's institution prior to data collection. In this study, 985 participants aged at least 18 years were recruited from four universities in Liaoning province of mainland China. In 2020, Liaoning province was estimated to contain a population of 42.59 million (3.02% of the total population of mainland China; National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2021). More than half of the participants (55%) were recruited at random from within the university compounds (e.g., libraries, common areas, reading corners, and student cafeterias), while the remaining participants (45%) were recruited through a convenience sampling approach (e.g., recruitment from classrooms with prior consent from the instructors, and via word-of-mouth among university students). Informed consent was obtained from the participants, and they were assured that their responses to the anonymous paper-based questionnaire would be kept confidential and used only for research purposes. The participants were also informed that their participation in the study was completely voluntary, and that they would not be receiving any monetary reward for their participation. All the questionnaires were completed in private without any interruptions. On average, the questionnaires were completed in 25 minutes. The response rate was approximately 90%.

With reference to Table 1, of the total sample ($n = 985$), 564 participants (57.3%) were females and 421 participants were males (42.7%). Their mean age was 21.56 years ($SD = 2.42$, range = 18–33). The male participants, on average, were 21.94 years of age ($SD = 2.45$), while the average age among the female participants was 21.28 years ($SD = 2.36$); this difference was significant ($t = 4.27$, $p < 0.001$). Over two thirds (67.9%) of the participants were single. Over three quarters (81.7%) of them reported holding no religious belief, and over two thirds (69.5%) were educated at the university level.

[INSERT TABLE 1 HERE]

2.1.2| Measures

A series of self-reported measures were used to explore the participants' perceptions of stalking behavior, the motives of stalkers, and the effective strategies for coping with stalking victimization. In addition, measures of social bonding and self-control were included to examine the effects of these psychosocial characteristics on the participants' perceptions of effective strategies for coping with stalking victimization. The questionnaire containing all the measures was printed in both English and Chinese to accommodate the participants' different language abilities. To develop the Chinese version of the questionnaire, an experienced and academically qualified English-to-Chinese translator first translated the English measures into Chinese. The Chinese measures were then back-translated into English to ensure face validity, and subsequently compared with the original English measures to ensure content similarity.

2.1.2.1/ Perceptions of stalking behavior

The participants were surveyed about their perceptions of stalking behavior. They were neither supplied with any context, nor were they instructed to assume a particular perspective (e.g., as the recipient of a behavior). Instead, they were provided a list of behaviors and asked, "Which of the following behaviors would you perceive as stalking behavior?" The participants could answer "yes" or "no" to each behavior and were allowed to select more than one behavior in their response. The list of behaviors was adopted from Amar's (2006) study, in which nine items were taken from Tjaden and Thoennes' (1998) "National Violence Against Women Survey" and the other three items were commonly cited in the stalking literature. The list included three categories of stalking behavior ("surveillance," "approach," and "intimidation and aggression"); each of these was identified using four items. Samples of the items included "followed or spied on the victim" (an item indicating surveillance stalking behavior), "sent the victim unsolicited or harassing emails" (an item indicating approach stalking behavior), and "made the victim fear for her/his safety or life" (an item indicating intimidation and aggression

stalking behavior). The Cronbach's α of this measure was 0.82 (male participants = 0.85, female participants = 0.77) in the present study.

2.1.2.2/ Perceived motives of stalkers

To measure the participants' perceived motives of stalkers, a scale of 12 items developed by Baum and colleagues (2009) was used. The participants were surveyed to determine whether they perceived each of the items listed to constitute a motive for a person to initiate stalking. The participants could answer "yes" or "no" to each item and were allowed to select more than one item in their response. Samples of the items included "to retaliate against the victim," "to control the victim," and "to get the victim back into a relationship." The Cronbach's α of this measure was 0.86 (male participants = 0.86, female participants = 0.86) in the present study.

2.1.2.3/ Strategies perceived to be effective for coping with stalking victimization

The participants were asked about their perceived strategy (or strategies) for effectively coping with stalking victimization in a 40-item measure of the coping strategies used by the victims of stalking. This measure was developed by Cupach and Spitzberg (2004) and later adopted by Amar and Alexy (2010). The measure contained tactics corresponding to five categories of coping strategies (i.e., moving inward [avoidant] strategies, moving outward [proactive] strategies, moving away [passive] strategies, moving toward or with [compliance] strategies, and moving against [aggressive] strategies). A dichotomized response format (0 = *no*, 1 = *yes*) was used, and the participants were allowed to choose more than one tactic that they perceived to be effective. Samples of the items included "seeking meaning in context" (an avoidant tactic), "seeking the input of legal parties or members of law enforcement" (a proactive tactic), "behaving cautiously" (a passive tactic), "using problem-solving negotiation with the stalker" (a compliance tactic), and "pursuing a legal case against the stalker" (an aggressive tactic). The Cronbach's α of this measure was 0.87 (male participants = 0.89, female participants = 0.66) in the present study.

2.1.2.4/ *Social bonds*

To assess the participants' conventional attachments and ties to their parents, peers, schools, and society, the 18-item Social Bonding Scale (Chapple, McQuillan, & Berdahl, 2005) was used. This scale was developed based on Hirschi's (1969) social control theory. In this scale, a participant's level of attachment to their parents was measured as two separate latent constructs (i.e., parental dependence and parental bonding). The participants indicated their responses to the items on the scale according to either a 4-point (1 = *never*, 4 = *many times*; two items) or a 5-point (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*; 16 items) Likert scale. The total score ranged from 18 to 38; a higher score indicated a stronger social bond. Samples of the items included "I would like to be the kind of person my best friend is," "I share my thoughts and feelings with my mother/father," and "I have lots of respect for the police." The Cronbach's α of this measure was 0.75 (male participants = 0.72, female participants = 0.77) in the present study.

2.1.2.5/ *Self-control*

Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) self-control theory proposed that low self-control could be commonly indicated by six elements: impulsivity, risk-seeking tendencies, self-centeredness, a preference for physical activities, and a preference for simple tasks. The 23-item Low Self-Control Scale, developed by Grasmick and colleagues (1993), was used to examine the participants' levels of self-control. This scale was measured on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly agree*, 4 = *strongly disagree*), with a total score ranging from 23 to 92. A higher score indicated greater self-control. Samples of the items included "I often act in the spur of the moment without stopping to think," "I will take a risk sometimes, just for the fun of it," and "I lose my temper pretty easily." The Cronbach's α of this measure was 0.84 (male participants = 0.87, female participants = 0.82) in the present study.

2.2| **Data analytic strategy**

Descriptive statistics were calculated to illustrate the participants' perceptions concerning stalking behavior, the motives of stalkers, and the effective strategies for coping with stalking victimization. In addition, cross-tabular (i.e., χ^2) analyses were used to explore potential sex differences in the participants' perceptions. A measure of association [i.e., the Phi coefficient (between two constructs, and on two levels of each construct)] was calculated to assess the statistical significance of the strength of each relationship; a value of 1.00 for this coefficient demonstrated a perfect relationship. Adopting Cohen's standard for interpreting cross-tabular effect sizes, relationships with Phi values of 0.29 and below were regarded as weak; those with values between 0.30 and 0.49 were regarded as moderate, while those with values of 0.50 and above were regarded as strong (see Gravetter, Wallnau, & Forzano, 2017). Finally, logistic regressions were used to examine the effects of the participants' demographic (i.e., age, sex, religiosity, and education) and psychosocial (i.e., social bonding and self-control) characteristics on their perceptions of effective coping strategies for stalking victimization.

2.3| Ethical considerations

This study was approved by the ethical committee of the author's university. The participants could withdraw from the study, contact the primary investigator, and/or receive professional counseling at any moment. All of the data were collected anonymously and no personal identifiers were recorded.

3| RESULTS

3.1| Sex distribution of perceptions of stalking behaviors

Table 2 presents the participants' rating of stalking behaviors. Over 60% of the participants perceived the behaviors described in 9 of the 12 items to be unacceptable. These items corresponded to three different behavioral clusters. The behaviors that were most often regarded as unacceptable were "made the victim fear for her/his safety or life" (90.9%), "threatened to harm or kill the victim" (90.0%), and "followed or spied on the victim" (88.0%).

The behaviors that were least frequently considered to be unacceptable were “sent the victim unsolicited letters or written correspondence” (25.6%), “made unsolicited phone calls to the victim” (29.7%), and “left unwanted items for the victim to find” (38.5%). Sex differences in individuals’ perceptions of stalking behaviors were found in eight items; in all these, female participants were significantly more likely than male participants to perceive the behaviors to constitute stalking. Notably, sex differences were observed in all four of the surveillance-oriented behaviors. Nevertheless, the effect sizes of these differences were weak (their Phi values ranged from -0.08 to 0.17). Three of the four items with nonsignificant sex differences were also the items that were the least often considered to constitute stalking behaviors.

[INSERT TABLE 2 HERE]

3.2| Sex distribution of perceptions of stalkers’ motives

The participants’ perceptions of stalkers’ motives are shown in Table 3. Of 12 motives, only 3 items were considered to constitute stalkers’ motives among 60% or more of the sample. These items were “to retaliate against the victim” (74.8%), “mental illness/emotional instability (73.8%), and “to control the victim” (68.9%). Despite the low consensus on most motives, sex differences were observed for four of the motives. A significantly larger proportion of male participants than female participants considered “found the victim attractive” (51.1% vs. 42.7%), “to get the victim back into a relationship” (48.5% vs. 38.8%), “due to a different cultural belief/background” (29.7% vs. 19.1%), and “believed the victim liked the attention” (28.0% vs. 21.6%) to be motives for stalking. The strengths of these relationships were weak, with Phi values ranging from -0.07 to -0.12.

[INSERT TABLE 3 HERE]

3.3| Sex distribution of strategies perceived to be effective for coping with stalking victimization

As shown in Table 4, 15 of the 40 listed tactics were considered to be effective for coping with stalking victimization by over 60% of the sample. The tactics that were the most frequently regarded as effective were “seeking the input of legal parties or members of law enforcement” (88.1%), “pursuing a legal case against the stalker” (84.4%), and “building a legal case against the stalker” (83.4%). The tactics that were deemed the least effective were “engage in self-destructive escapism” (8.1%), “blame yourself (the victim)” (8.9%), and “deny the problem” (9.3%). Significant sex differences were observed for 27 tactics, which were considered to constitute effective coping strategies by one sex but not by the other. These included six avoidant tactics, four proactive tactics, five passive tactics, five compliance tactics, and seven aggressive tactics. Nevertheless, the strengths of these relationships were weak (their Phi values ranged from 0.07 to 0.19). In general, both female and male participants were as likely to endorse “seeking the input of legal parties or members of law enforcement” (91.6% of female participants and 83.7% of male participants) and “pursuing a legal case against the stalker” (88.2% of female participants and 79.9% of male participants) as effective coping tactics. In addition, female participants were more likely to endorse “building a legal case against the stalker” (89.8%) as an effective coping tactic, while male participants were more likely to endorse “behaving cautiously” (77.6%) as an effective coping tactic.

[INSERT TABLE 4 HERE]

3.4| Demographic and psychosocial differences in perceptions of effective strategies for coping with stalking victimization

Logistic regressions were used to examine the correlational effects of demographic (i.e., age, sex, religiosity, education) and psychosocial (i.e., levels of social bonds and self-control) factors on the participants’ perceptions of effective strategies for coping with stalking victimization. Table 5 indicates that four of these models were significant. A lower educational level was significantly associated with the perception that the avoidant tactics ($B = -1.11$, $SE =$

0.56, $p = 0.047$), the proactive tactics ($B = -1.08$, $SE = 0.48$, $p = 0.023$), and the aggressive tactics ($B = -1.18$, $SE = 0.53$, $p = 0.025$) were effective for coping with stalking victimization. In addition, participants' levels of social bonding were positively correlated with their perceptions the proactive tactics ($B = 0.09$, $SE = 0.03$, $p < 0.001$) and the aggressive tactics ($B = 0.13$, $SE = 0.03$, $p < 0.001$) were effective for coping with stalking victimization. Furthermore, participants' levels of self-control were negatively associated with their tendency to consider the compliance tactics to be effective for coping with stalking victimization ($B = -0.03$, $SE = 0.01$, $p = 0.025$).

[INSERT TABLE 5 HERE]

4| DISCUSSION

This study does not only make important contributions to knowledge on stalking behaviors, but also advances our understanding of stalking in an understudied population— young adults in mainland China. Using a large sample of 985 postsecondary educated young adults (of both sexes) who were aged at least 18 years and recruited in mainland China, the sex differences in individuals' perceptions concerning stalking behavior, the motives of stalkers, and the effective strategies for coping with stalking victimization were investigated. Additionally, the relationships between individuals' demographic (i.e., age, sex, religiosity, and education) and psychosocial (i.e., social bonds and self-control) characteristics and the strategies that they deemed to be effective for coping with stalking victimization were also examined.

Several noteworthy findings from the study warrant further discussion. First, significantly more female than male participants regarded the listed surveillance-, approach-, and intimidation- and aggression-oriented- behaviors as stalking behaviors. These findings largely align with previous studies on individuals' perceptions of stalking behaviors (Chan & Sheridan, 2020b; Chan, Sheridan, & Adjorlolo, 2020; Finnegan & Fritz, 2012; Lambert, Smith, Geistman, Cluse-Tolar, & Jiang, 2013; Yanowitz, 2006). It is possible that women may be the

victims of stalking more often than men (Baum, Catalano, Rand, & Rose, 2009). Defensive attribution theory posits that an individual who makes a judgment in a situation in which they share some attribute with the potential victim of a wrongdoing will generate empathy-based responses (Elkins, Phillips, & Konopaske, 2002). Following this argument, findings of this study suggest that women may make more internalized and attributional judgments than men. Another possible explanation for the results is that because women generally hold more liberal perceptions of social issues and are more supportive of progressive social causes, they are more willing than their male counterparts to extend rights to minority groups and other women (Whitehead & Blakenship, 2000). Nonetheless, other studies have noted an opposite pattern in which men are more likely to judge intrusive acts to constitute stalking (Cass, 2011; Sheridan, Gillett, & Davies, 2002; Spitzberg & Veksler, 2007).

Significant sex differences were also observed in the participants' perceptions of stalkers' motives. Significantly larger proportions of male than female participants believed that stalkers were motivated by "finding the victim attractive" (51.1% vs. 42.7%; the fifth most common behavior among both sexes), a desire "to get the victim back into a relationship" (48.5% vs. 38.8%; the sixth and eighth most common behaviors among male and female participants, respectively), the "different cultural belief/background of the victim" (29.7% vs. 19.1%; the third and least common behaviors among male and female participants, respectively), or a belief that the victim "liked the attention of being stalked" (28.0% vs. 21.6%; the second and second and third least common behaviors among male and female participants, respectively).

This study also found that a significantly larger proportion of male participants perceived intimacy seeking to constitute a primary motive for stalking. This motive corresponds to what Mullen and colleagues describe as the "intimacy seeker" stalker category (Mullen, Pathé, Purcell, & Stuart, 1999). Intimacy seekers aim to establish loving unions with

individuals who have triggered their affections; they often mistakenly believe that these individuals reciprocate their feelings (such beliefs may also emerge during a delusional state). The category of “stalking based on love” proposed by Sheridan and Boon (2002)—wherein the victim is perceived as an object of love to be won over, not a partner that is to be punished for rejecting the stalker— also relates to these motives. Importantly, the findings of this study broadly align with actual trends in stalking documented by previous studies, which have shown that male stalkers are more likely to be motivated by desires to maintain relationships with their former partners (Purcell, Pathé, & Mullen, 2001; Meloy & Boyd, 2003). Female stalkers, in contrast, are more likely to be motivated by anger and hostility toward their victims (63%) (Meloy & Boyd, 2003). Nevertheless, the existence of a prior relationship between the stalker and victim has been found to play a decisive role in determining an individual’s intention to engage in stalking (e.g., an ex-intimate partner vs. a non-intimate non-stranger, or a stranger vs. a non-stranger; Chan & Sheridan, 2021b).

The findings of this study indicate that young men and women are on the whole equally likely to perceive avoidant tactics to constitute effective coping strategies for victims of stalking (three tactics each with significantly higher percentages than the opposite sex). However, a significantly larger proportion of women (as compared to men) deem passive tactics (in four out of five tactics), proactive tactics (in three out of four tactics), and aggressive tactics (in four out of seven tactics) to be effective for coping with stalking victimization. Furthermore, a significantly larger proportion of men (as compared to women) deem compliance tactics (in four out of five tactics) to be effective for coping with stalking victimization. Notably, the few studies on the coping strategies used by the victims of stalking have failed to conclusively characterize the preferred coping strategies of male and female victims. Nonetheless, studies have found that victims of both sexes are tend to resort to passive tactics (e.g., ignoring the stalker or altering one’s schedule to physically avoid the stalker),

proactive tactics (e.g., seeking professional help), and compliance tactics (e.g., seeking reconciliation with the stalker, or confronting or bargaining with the stalker) (Bjerregaard, 2000; Chan & Sheridan, 2020c; Fremouw, Westrup, & Pennypacker, 1997; Podaná & Imříšková, 2016). Regardless of the types of coping responses employed, stalking victims were more inclined to deal with their stalking victimization themselves rather than looking for more professional help or guidance in handling their situation. This trend is also generally observed in the present study.

The findings of this study also show that individuals' demographic and psychosocial characteristics influence their perceptions of the tactics that constitute effective strategies for coping with stalking. Specifically, this study shows that an individual's relative educational level, social bonds, and self-control significantly influence his or her perception that proactive, compliance, or aggressive strategies are effective for coping with stalking. Simply put, individuals who are less educated (i.e., secondary school vs. university educated) are more likely to endorse avoidant, proactive, and aggressive strategies for coping with stalking. Conceivably, such individuals may lack the knowledge (e.g., intervention skills and intellectual maturity) and resources (e.g., sources of professional support) that are associated with more practical and effective strategies for coping with stalking.

Interestingly, individuals with strong social bonds were more likely to endorse proactive and aggressive tactics as effective strategies for coping with stalking. According to social control theory, individuals with strong social bonds are more likely to maintain prosocial attachments with their parents, friends, and society as a whole (Hirschi, 1969). These individuals tend to benefit from stronger social support and social networks, which help to maintain their psychosocial well-being. Such individuals are therefore able to solicit third-party assistance—which range from informal support (e.g., seeking advice or shelter from a friend) to formal resources (e.g., seeking counseling, intervention from law enforcement, or obtaining

a restraining order)—as an effective tactic for dealing with stalking victimization in the long term (Spitzberg & Cupach, 2007). However, such proactive interventions can be undermined if these individuals also respond to stalkers with aggression, for instance warning or threatening their stalkers in retaliation. Such behaviors will either escalate the intensity of their interactions with their stalkers or diminish the credibility of their future actions should they not follow through with their threats (e.g., to call the police).

This study also shows that individuals with low self-control are more likely to use compliance tactics to cope with stalking. Such individuals are more inclined to face their stalkers directly and personally to overcome their victimization. This finding is consistent with self-control theory, which posits that individuals with low self-control are more inclined to engage in impulsive and risk-seeking behaviors, and often fail to appreciate long-term consequences of their actions (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990). Compliance tactics may be an ineffective response to stalking because direct conversation with a stalker can always be rationalized by the stalker as a promise of future interactions (Spitzberg & Cupach, 2007). Notably, stalking behaviors are purposeful actions, and thus, it can be unproductive to reason with unreasonable individuals (e.g., stalkers) who are somewhat decisive in their intentions.

Caution should be exercised in interpreting the findings of this study owing to several limitations. First, this study used self-reported information in standardized measures, which may have failed to capture the participants' complete perceptions of stalking. For instance, biases such as social desirability may have influenced the participants' truthfulness in reporting their perceptions. Future studies should therefore consider incorporating a measure of response bias. Second, although the measures that used in this study were mostly pre-existing tools with good validity and reliability, they have been developed based on Western populations. Hence, these measures may not adequately capture the nature and dynamics of stalking as experienced by people in Eastern cultures, particularly within the Chinese context. In future, studies should

collect data using a mixed-methods approach; this will facilitate the development of tools that may better characterize the perceptions on stalking and experiences of stalking among non-Western individuals. Besides, measures used in this study may have overlooked some uncommon or uncommonly expected scenarios. For example, it is possible that stalking perpetration can be resulted from erotomania or delusional motivation (e.g., the victim is ambivalent and sends mixed signals, causing the stalker some confusion leading to his/her overinterpretation of a potential intimate relationship). Finally, this sample consisted of university students from one province in mainland China. Therefore, the findings are not necessarily generalizable to the wider mainland Chinese population, or to the country's population of young adults. Future studies should thus investigate the phenomenon of stalking using samples that contain diverse age groups, educational levels, and geographic regions.

5| CONCLUSIONS

Although it is widely recognized that many of the activities that constitute stalking are illegal in themselves, some acts are relatively innocuous when considered in isolation; these are only viewed as problematic when they occur together within a particular context (James & MacKenzie, 2017). Furthermore, as the victims of stalking are a heterogenous group, coping strategies and the outcomes of coping may vary across different individuals and situations. For instance, external influences (e.g., environmental contexts) can trigger different coping responses toward the same stressor(s). Hence, the effectiveness of a coping strategy should be considered on an individual basis (e.g., based on an individual's personality and the practicality of the response). As such, there is no "one-size-fits-all" approach to coping with stalking, and this needs to be recognized by those who seek to advise and intervene—especially in parts of the world lacking legislation against stalking and its potentially serious impact is underappreciated.

Notwithstanding the noted limitations, this study is important in two major ways: (i) to advance our knowledge of perceptions of the motives of stalking and the experiences of victims from an under-researched young adult population; and (ii) to extend the overall (limited) understanding of the relationships between individuals' demographic and psychosocial characteristics and their perceptions concerning the effectiveness of different strategies for coping with stalking victimization. As such, the present study provides the solid groundwork for additional research to better characterize the nature and dynamics of stalking in mainland China. Research of this nature will advance the literature on stalking, especially in the Asian context. As there are currently no laws against stalking in mainland China—and indeed in most Asian countries—this study sheds much needed light on the phenomenon of stalking from the perceptions of individuals in a non-Western population. It is the hope that legislation specifically addressing the problem of stalking will be established in countries where it does not presently exist.

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Table 1 Sample demographic characteristics ($n = 985$)

Characteristics	<i>n</i>	Percentage
Sex		($n = 985$)
Male	421	42.7%
Female	564	57.3%
Marital status		($n = 965$)
Single	655	67.9%
Non-single (i.e., married or unmarried partnership)	310	32.1%
Religious belief		($n = 973$)
Without a religious belief	795	81.7%
With a religious belief (e.g., Catholic, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism)	178	18.3%
Highest education attainment		($n = 973$)
Secondary school education or below	300	30.5%
University education (e.g., associate degree/higher diploma, undergraduate and postgraduate degrees)	685	69.5%

Table 2 Sex differences on perceptions of stalking behaviors ($n = 985$)

Behaviors	Perceived as a Stalking Behavior (%)			χ^2 (Phi)
	Overall	Male	Female	
Surveillance-oriented behaviors				
1. Followed or spied on the victim	88.0	82.6	92.4	19.72 (-0.15) ***
2. Contacted the victim's friends/family to learn of her/his whereabouts	80.9	76.2	84.9	10.52 (-0.11) **
3. Stood outside the victim's home, school, or workplace	68.3	60.1	75.1	23.83 (0.17) ***
4. Showed up at places the victim were although s/he had no business being there	60.3	55.0	64.8	8.68 (-0.10) **
Approach-oriented behaviors				
5. Sent the victim unsolicited or harassing emails	85.5	82.3	88.2	6.05 (-0.08) *
6. Tried to communicate with the victim against her/his will	75.2	67.0	81.9	25.79 (0.17) ***
7. Made unsolicited phone calls to the victim	29.7	29.2	30.2	2.48 (0.05)
8. Sent the victim unsolicited letters or written correspondence	25.6	28.5	23.3	3.71 (0.07)
Intimidation- and aggression-oriented behaviors				
9. Made the victim feel fearful for her/his safety or life	90.9	86.4	94.7	18.36 (-0.15) ***
10. Threatened to harm or kill the victim	90.0	86.1	93.3	12.29 (-0.12) ***
11. Vandalized the victim's property/destroyed something s/he loved	85.7	83.6	87.6	2.78 (-0.06)
12. Left unwanted items for the victim to find	38.5	36.7	40.0	0.99 (-0.03)

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Note. Significant after the Benjamini-Hochberg procedure was applied to correct for multiple p-values (FDR 0.10).

Table 3 Sex differences on perceptions of stalkers' motives ($n = 985$)

Motives	Perceived Motives for Stalking Perpetration (%)			
	Overall	Male	Female	χ^2 (Phi)
1. To retaliate against the victim	74.8	75.8	74.1	0.35 (-0.02)
2. Mental illness/emotional instability	73.8	75.8	72.3	1.47 (-0.04)
3. To control the victim	68.9	71.7	66.8	2.69 (-0.05)
4. Due to substance abuse	52.9	56.3	50.4	3.41 (-0.06)
5. Found the victim attractive	46.3	51.1	42.7	6.74 (-0.08) **
6. The victim was a convenient target	43.1	44.2	42.4	0.32 (-0.02)
7. To get the victim back into a relationship	42.9	48.5	38.8	9.12 (-0.10) **
8. The victim caught the perpetrator doing something	39.3	39.4	39.2	0.01 (-0.01)
9. Due to stalked liked attention	39.1	39.4	38.8	0.04 (-0.01)
10. Believed the victim liked the attention	24.4	28.0	21.6	5.35 (-0.07) *
11. Due to different cultural belief/background	23.7	29.7	19.1	14.84 (-0.12) ***
12. No specific motive/motives not listed	21.9	24.5	20.0	2.76 (-0.05)

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Note. Significant after the Benjamini-Hochberg procedure was applied to correct for multiple p-values (FDR 0.10).

Table 4 Sex differences on strategies perceived to be effective for coping with stalking victimization ($n = 985$)

Coping Strategies	Strategies Perceived to be Effective for Coping with Stalking Victimization (%)			
	Overall	Male	Female	χ^2 (Phi)
Moving inward (avoidant) tactics				
1. Seek meaning in context	77.6	73.5	81.0	6.93 (0.09) **
2. Seek therapies	73.1	68.7	76.8	7.16 (0.09) **
3. Minimize the problem in the victim's own mind	72.0	66.1	76.8	12.18 (0.12) **
4. Ignore the problem	44.4	42.0	46.3	1.66 (0.04)
5. Seek meaning in general	42.2	43.1	41.5	0.21 (0.02)
6. Deny the problem	9.3	13.7	5.7	15.91 (0.14) ***
7. Blame yourself (the victim)	8.9	12.1	6.3	8.70 (0.10) **
8. Engage in self-destructive escapism	8.1	11.9	5.1	13.26 (0.12) ***
Moving outward (proactive) tactics				
9. Seek input of legal parties/members of law enforcement	88.1	83.7	91.6	12.94 (0.12) ***
10. Engage in direct involvement of others	75.2	72.0	77.8	3.95 (0.07) *
11. Engage in social support	70.9	67.4	73.9	4.44 (0.07) *
12. Engage in independent or private assistance	59.0	56.3	61.3	2.18 (0.05)
13. Seek sympathy from others	20.0	23.3	17.3	4.86 (0.08) *
Moving away (passive) tactics				
14. Behave cautiously	81.9	77.6	85.4	8.80 (0.10) **
15. Distance yourself (the victim) from the stalker	77.7	74.3	80.4	4.63 (0.07) *
16. Attempt to end the relationship	63.1	58.8	66.7	5.87 (0.08) *
17. Redirect or divert attention of the stalker	61.1	59.1	62.7	1.12 (0.04)
18. Control the interaction with the stalker	54.9	48.8	59.8	10.41 (0.11) **
19. Block your (the victim) physical accessibility to the stalker	50.2	52.2	48.2	1.15 (0.04)
20. Relocate to another physical location	42.3	40.1	44.1	1.37 (0.04)

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Note. Significant after the Benjamini-Hochberg procedure was applied to correct for multiple p-values (FDR 0.10).

Table 4 cont.

Coping Strategies	Perceived Effective Coping Strategies for Stalking Victimization (%)			
	Overall	Male	Female	χ^2 (Phi)
21. Ignore the stalker's behavior	41.2	40.7	41.5	0.06 (0.01)
22. Block your (the victim) electronic or media accessibility	34.2	36.2	32.6	1.29 (0.04)
23. Restrict your (the victim) accessibility to the stalker	32.6	32.4	32.7	0.01 (0.01)
24. Use verbal "escape" tactics	26.2	26.2	26.2	1.22 (0.04)
25. Detach or depersonalize	12.4	14.9	10.4	4.12 (0.07) *
Moving toward or with (compliance) tactics				
26. Use problem solving negotiation with the stalker	65.3	59.4	70.2	11.00 (0.11) **
27. Negotiate relationship definition with the stalker	47.5	49.6	45.8	1.26 (0.04)
28. Use nonverbal aggression against the stalker	27.7	33.4	23.0	11.47 (0.12) **
29. Deceive the stalker	27.4	33.5	22.4	13.32 (0.12) ***
30. Accept promises from the stalker	25.3	28.3	22.8	3.41 (0.06)
31. Bargain with the stalker	14.2	18.8	10.4	12.42 (0.12) **
32. Diminish the seriousness of the situation	10.0	15.9	5.1	28.16 (0.18) ***
Moving against (aggressive) tactics				
33. Pursue a legal case against the stalker	84.4	79.9	88.2	11.08 (0.11) **
34. Build a legal case against the stalker	83.4	75.6	89.8	31.27 (0.19) ***
35. Use electronic protective responses	76.4	72.1	79.9	7.13 (0.09) **
36. Use protective responses to the stalker's current behavior	65.8	60.7	70.0	8.22 (0.10) **
37. Attempt to deter future behavior of the stalker	58.0	56.4	59.3	0.71 (0.03)
38. Issue verbal warnings or threats to the stalker	36.8	46.9	28.5	30.91 (0.19) ***
39. Use electronic retaliatory responses	27.1	34.2	21.4	17.79 (0.14) ***
40. Use physical violence against the stalker	20.9	28.5	14.6	25.29 (0.17) ***

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Note. Significant after the Benjamini-Hochberg procedure was applied to correct for multiple p-values (FDR 0.10).

Table 5 Logistic regression models of demographic and psychosocial differences in perceptions of effective strategies for coping with stalking victimization ($n = 985$)

Demographic and psychosocial characteristics	Avoidant (moving inward)		Proactive (moving outward)		Passive (moving away)		Compliance (moving toward/with)		Aggressive (moving against)	
	B	OR	B	OR	B	OR	B	OR	B	OR
	(SE)	(95% CI)	(SE)	(95% CI)	(SE)	(95% CI)	(SE)	(95% CI)	(SE)	(95% CI)
Age	-0.07 (0.07)	0.93 [0.82, 1.06]	-0.06 (0.06)	0.94 [0.83, 1.06]	-0.01 (0.08)	1.00 [0.72, 3.47]	-0.01 (0.04)	1.00 [0.92, 1.08]	-0.11 (0.07)	0.90 [0.78, 1.02]
Sex (0 = male, 1 = female)	0.41 (0.37)	1.51 [0.73, 3.11]	0.46 (0.36)	1.58 [0.78, 3.20]	0.46 (0.40)	1.58 [0.72, 3.47]	-0.04 (0.19)	0.96 [0.66, 1.40]	0.33 (0.40)	1.39 [0.64, 3.01]
Religiosity	-0.15 (0.12)	0.87 [0.68, 1.10]	-0.09 (0.12)	0.92 [0.72, 1.16]	-0.08 (0.13)	0.92 [0.71, 1.20]	0.05 (0.07)	1.05 [0.93, 1.20]	-0.15 (0.13)	0.86 [0.67, 1.12]
Education	-1.11 (0.56)	0.33* [0.11, 0.94]	-1.08 (0.48)	0.34* [0.13, 0.86]	-0.91 (0.57)	0.40 [0.13, 1.22]	-0.08 (0.22)	0.93 [0.61, 1.42]	-1.18 (0.53)	0.31* [0.11, 0.86]
Social Bonds	0.02 (0.03)	1.02 [0.97, 1.08]	0.09 (0.03)	1.10*** [1.05, 1.15]	0.01 (0.03)	1.01 [0.95, 1.07]	0.01 (0.01)	1.00 [0.98, 1.03]	0.13 (0.03)	1.14*** [1.08, 1.20]
Self-control	-0.01 (0.02)	0.99 [0.95, 1.04]	-0.03 (0.02)	0.97 [0.93, 1.02]	-0.02 (0.02)	0.98 [0.94, 1.03]	-0.03 (0.01)	0.97** [0.94, 0.99]	-0.02 (0.03)	0.98 [0.93, 1.03]
Constant	4.79 (2.34)	120.75	1.51 (2.17)	0.77	4.59 (2.60)	98.81	3.57 (1.29)	35.63	0.81 (2.36)	2.25
Model χ^2	10.33*		23.40**		5.56		8.53*		31.40***	
Nagelkerke R^2	0.04		0.09		0.03		0.02		0.14	
Hosmer-Lemeshow test	10.01		8.70		9.19		5.95		7.36	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$