# *Perceptions of stalking in Malaysia and England: the influence of perpetrator-target prior relationship and personality*

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**Abstract**

Little work has examined whether culture and personality influence perceptions of stalking behaviour. A fictional stalking scenario was manipulated to assess judgements of case severity, culpability, and consequences for the stalker and target, measured by a five-item Likert scale. Participants were mainly students based in Malaysia (n = 269; 63.9% females) and England (n = 167; 90.4% females). As expected, participants were more likely to judge the stalking as less serious and the victim as more responsible when the stalker was depicted as an ex-partner, as opposed to a stranger or acquaintance. Malaysian participants judged the stalking as less serious and victims as more responsible than their English counterparts, as did male participants. The influence of personality traits was also assessed, using the HEXACO Personality Inventory-Revised, the Short Dark Triad and the Varieties of Sadistic Tendencies measures. Correlational analyses revealed narcissism, psychopathy, and sadism scores to be negatively associated with perceived severity. Emotionality was negatively associated with perceived victim responsibility whilst all Dark Tetrad traits were positively associated with perceived victim responsibility. Findings extend literature indicating that a range of factors, both internal and external to the individual observer, contribute to how stalking is perceived.

# 1    Introduction

## 1.1    *Perceptions of stalking*

Stalking, typically defined as a pattern of unwanted and repeated attention, harassment, contact or any other course of conduct directed at a specific person and would cause a reasonable person to feel fear, is a significant public health problem (Baum et al., 2009). Increasing attention is paid to the course and nature of stalking outside of WEIRD (Western, educated, industrialised, rich, and democratic; Henrich et al., 2010) countries and it is now accepted that stalking is phenomenon that is prevalent globally (Chan & Sheridan, 2020). Most crimes consist of one act, but stalking comprises a series of actions over time. Actions that are ostensibly harmless and legal within a courtship context (e.g., sending gifts, texting) can escalate into threatening behaviour and ultimately result in harm towards the target (Sinclair & Frieze, 2000). It is often unclear where the boundaries between normal courtship and obsessive behaviour lie, making stalking an elusive phenomenon to define and study. What is clear, however, is that victims of stalking often experience adverse psychological, physical, social, and financial consequences (Dreßing et al., 2020).

A sizeable proportion of existing work has focussed on perceptions of stalking, particularly how the prior relationship between the pursuer and the target influences such perceptions. A robust relational bias has been identified, in that harassment behaviour is often perceived as more serious and police intervention as more necessary when the perpetrator is portrayed as a stranger as opposed to an ex-partner (see A. J. Scott, 2020 for a review). However, the reality is that stalkers are more likely to be ex-partners (see Spitzberg & Cupach, 2007), who are more persistent and likely to use violence than stranger or acquaintance stalkers (McEwan et al., 2009). These stereotypical biases exist even among police officers, but officers with direct experience handling stalking-related cases have

reported less tendency to attribute responsibility to the victim than those who have not (Weller et al., 2012).

To best support victims, it is crucial that the public identify stalking behaviours and recognise their impact. Misconceptions about stalking prevent victims from reaching out and may result in a lack of social and political demand for change. Furthermore, a misunderstanding of the behaviour or legislation may lead to inaction by law enforcement officers (Korkodeilou, 2016). It is therefore important to identify and address circumstances that lead to such misconceptions.

## 1.2 *The role of culture*

Whilst literature is scarce, some evidence indicates that culture contributes to how stalking is perceived and how acceptable various intrusive behaviours are judged to be, as reported in an international comparison study by Sheridan et al. (2016) (see also Sheridan et al., 2017). The study, which included participants from Armenia, Australia, England, Egypt, Finland, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Portugal, Scotland, and Trinidad, found that experiences of different intrusive behaviours vary between countries, corresponding with gender empowerment, power distance, and individualism indices. For instance, women from countries with lower gender empowerment, higher power distance, and lower individualism more frequently reported experience of being monitored and controlled (e.g., being spied on, experiencing angry reactions when seen out with others), whereas women from countries with higher gender empowerment more often reported experiencing intrusive behaviours relating to courtship and requests for sex (e.g., asked to go on a date repeatedly, asked to engage in sex at social events).

## 1.3 *The role of personality*

To date, individual differences studies of stalking perceptions have tended to focus on gender and personal experience (A. J. Scott, 2020), with very limited work addressing how personality traits account for any reported variance in perceptions of stalking scenarios. Studies examining perceiver gender revealed females as more sympathetic to victims, while the actions of male stalkers are viewed as more impactful than female stalkers. The realities are again quite different, as research has demonstrated that male and female stalkers can be equally dangerous (Strand & McEwan, 2012). Recently, researchers found associations between personality and perceptions of aggression, in particular, attributions of blame. In a study by Brewer et al. (2019), women high on psychopathy were more likely to assign blame to victims, but less likely to blame perpetrators and advocate confrontation in response to sexual harassment. G. G. Scott et al., (2020) found that narcissism was related to increased victim-blaming and decreased perceived severity of online abuse. More recently, Hand et al. (2021) found sadism to predict higher attribution of blame to online abuse victims.

Researchers in the more general area of crime perceptions have identified associations related to how personality influences fear of crime. Ellis and Renouf (2018) and Guedes et al. (2018) reported emotionality and neuroticism to positively correlate with fear related to crime. It was recommended that personality variables be examined in relation to specific types of crime, to see how factors of particular criminal acts interact with individual traits.

Work by Brewer et al. (2019) and Hand et al. (2021) demonstrate that personality variables, in particular the Dark Tetrad traits, influence perceptions of aggression. The Dark Tetrad refers to conceptually distinct but empirically overlapping constructs – Machiavellianism, narcissism, psychopathy, and sadism: individuals high in psychopathy are impulsive and callous; narcissistic people have a sense of superiority and entitlement; highly Machiavellian individuals are selfish and will use whatever means necessary to attain their personal goals; and people high in sadism derive enjoyment from others' suffering (Paulhus,

2014). The Dark Tetrad personalities appear to facilitate rape-enabling attitudes (Jonason et al., 2017) and predict perpetration of intimate partner cyberstalking (March et al., 2020). Further, Asada et al. (2004) found that narcissism was positively related to the acceptability of obsessive relational intrusion. Stalking is conceptualised as a severe form of obsessive relational intrusion.

Less is known about the role of the HEXACO model of normal personality traits in stalking perceptions. This model by Ashton and Lee (2007) comprises six factors: honesty-humility, emotionality, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience. Honesty-humility is an additional domain complementing the classic Five-Factor Model, while the emotionality and agreeableness factors are distinct from the Five-Factor Model. The HEXACO emotionality factor contains the sentimentality-related content of the Five-Factor Model agreeableness factor, whereas its agreeableness factor includes the anger-related aspects of the Five-Factor Model neuroticism factor (Ashton et al., 2014). Bollmann et al. (2015) explored the relationships between the HEXACO model and just world beliefs. The just world hypothesis posits that people are motivated to view the world as a safe place where people get what they deserve and deserve what they get (Lerner & Simmons, 1966). In relation to stalking, it is argued that observers place greater responsibility on victims who had a relationship with their stalker than those targeted by a stranger, reasoning that victims with a shared history with their stalker could have brought the situation upon themselves (A. J. Scott, 2020). Bollmann and colleagues found personality traits to be differentially associated with personal and general just world beliefs; there was a positive relation between emotionality and general just-world belief, but only after controlling for personal just world belief. Additionally, agreeableness showed a positive relation with general just world belief while honesty-humility showed a negative relation.

**2. The Current Study**

The aim of the current study was twofold. First, it followed earlier works by examining whether relational subtypes of stalkers (stranger, acquaintance, or ex-partner) influence perception of whether the pursuer's behaviour constitutes stalking; necessitates police intervention; causes the victim alarm or personal distress; causes the victim to fear violence; and can be attributed to encouragement from the victim. Specifically, this study investigated whether differences in perceptions exist between Malaysian and English participants. England has outlawed stalking since 1997, but there are currently no specific anti-stalking laws in Malaysia. Some cross-cultural and/or cross-national variations are expected.

Second, the study explored how participants' personality variables, using the HEXACO model and the Dark Tetrad, influence perceptions of stalking. This is a novel area of investigation with reference to stalking perceptions, therefore it is difficult to make specific predictions about the influence of the HEXACO traits, but in light of the aggression literature, it is expected that the Dark Tetrad traits are positively associated with perceived severity and attribution of victim responsibility when judging stalking situations.

**3. Method**

*3.1 Participants*

Malaysian participants consisted of student and community samples recruited using convenience sampling. The online study was shared with students on the [University] Malaysia campus and contacts of the researchers via social media networks. There were 269 Malaysians (97 males, 172 females) aged 18 to 71 ($M = 28.44$, $SD = 11.86$). The majority was ethnic Chinese (51.3%), followed by Malay (34.9%), Indian (6.3%), and other ethnicities (5.9%), while 1.5% preferred not to say. More than half (59.1%) were single at the time of

the study, 12.6% were in a relationship, 26.4% were married, 0.4% were divorced, 1.1% were widowed, and 0.4% classified their marital status as others.

English participants comprised students recruited using the [University] research participant pool. There were 167 English participants (16 males, 151 females) aged 18 to 66 ($M = 21.61$, $SD = 7.91$). Most were White (71.3%), 14.4% were Asian British, 3.0% were Black British, 9.0% were of other ethnic backgrounds, while 2.4% preferred not to say. Half (50.9%) were single at the time of the study, 41.9% were in a relationship, 6.6% were married, and 0.6% were divorced.

*3.2    Measures*

*3.2.1        Perceptions of Stalking*

Participants were presented with one of three versions of a hypothetical stalking scenario (following A. J. Scott et al., 2013). All three versions described the same scenario, but each version represented a different degree of prior intimacy between the pursuer and the target: stranger, acquaintance, and ex-partner. The scenario depicted below is for the stranger condition:

> *Liza first met Adam when she visited the estate agents where he works to renew the lease on her apartment. As Liza was leaving the office Adam asked if she would like to join him for lunch. Liza thanked him for the offer, but declined. During the 3 months that followed, Adam sent Liza between 5 and 10 text messages a day, many of these messages asking why she was not interested in him. Adam also approached Liza on her way to work and telephoned her at home. Liza asked Adam to stop calling her, but he continued to call her regularly. In the end Liza disconnected the phone and Adam left several messages blaming her for what was happening. Most recently, Adam*

*arrived at Liza's home soon after she returned from work. Liza pretended that she*

*was out.*

In the acquaintance condition, Liza was portrayed as having worked together with Adam for three months when she declined his offer for a lunch date. In the ex-partner condition, Liza and Adam had been dating, but she ended the relationship. Participants were randomly assigned into one of the three conditions.

Participants' perceptions of stalking were measured on five 11-point Likert-type statements:

1. To what extent does Adam's behaviour constitute stalking? ('*Definitely not stalking*' to '*Definitely stalking*')

2. To what extent does Adam's behaviour necessitate police intervention? ('*Not at all necessary*' to '*Extremely necessary*')

3. Do you think Adam's behaviour will cause Liza alarm or personal distress? ('*Definitely not*' to '*Definitely*')

4. Do you think Adam's behaviour will cause Liza to fear that he will use violence against her? ('*Definitely not*' to '*Definitely*')

5. To what extent is Liza responsible for encouraging Adam's behaviour? ('*Not at all responsible*' to '*Totally responsible*')

### 3.2.2 Personality Traits

The 60-item HEXACO Personality Inventory-Revised (HEXACO-PI-R; Ashton & Lee, 2009) measured six major dimensions of personality, each comprising 10 items. The 27-item Short Dark Triad (SD3; Jones & Paulhus, 2014) assessed subclinical Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy. Each subscale contained nine items. The 16-item Varieties of Sadistic Tendencies (VAST; Paulhus & Jones, 2015) was used as a measure for everyday

sadism. All items were answered on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*), and the average of all items in each subscale was obtained.

*3.3    Procedure*

This study was administered anonymously via an online platform, Qualtrics. Upon obtaining informed consent, participants read the hypothetical scenario and answered the corresponding questions. They then completed the personality inventories and a demographic information questionnaire. Participants read a debrief sheet upon completion.  This study was reviewed and approved by the [University] School of Psychology and Clinical Language Sciences Research Ethics Committee.

## 4.    Results

Means and standard deviations for all five perception scale items by prior relationship conditions, gender, and nationality are shown in Table 1.The ratings on the first four perception scale items were then pooled to obtain a single perceived severity score. Pearson's correlations were conducted to examine the associations among the HEXACO traits, Dark Tetrad traits, perceived severity, and perceived victim responsibility scores, as shown in Table 2. Due to multiple comparisons, a Bonferroni correction was applied, hence only results with an alpha level of $p < .005$ are reported.  Emotionality was negatively associated with perceived victim responsibility. Narcissism, psychopathy, and sadism scores were negatively associated with perceived severity scores while all the Dark Tetrad traits were positively associated with perceived victim responsibility. The effect sizes are small to medium, ranging from $|.16|$ to $|.29|$.A hierarchical multiple regression was performed to determine whether the addition of the HEXACO and then Dark Tetrad traits improved the prediction of perceptions of severity above nationality, gender, and prior relationship alone,

as presented in Table 3. Given the gender imbalance in the current sample, gender was included as a predictor variable in the analyses. The full model of nationality, gender, prior relationship, HEXACO, and Dark Tetrad traits significantly predicted perceptions of behaviour severity, $R^2 = .17$, $F(14, 421) = 6.07$, $p < .001$, adjusted $R^2 = .14$. Another model sought to determine whether the addition of the HEXACO and then Dark Tetrad traits improved the prediction of perceptions of victim responsibility above nationality, gender and prior relationship alone, as presented in Table 4. The full model significantly predicted perceptions of victim responsibility, $R^2 = .32$, $F(14, 421) = 14.16$, $p < .001$, adjusted $R^2 = .30$.

## 5.   Discussion

This study examined the role of prior relationship between perpetrator and victim on perceptions of stalking, specifically whether differences exist between Malaysia and England. This study also expanded the literature by examining the role of personality factors in predicting stalking perceptions.

There were several findings. First, perpetrator-victim prior relationship influenced how participants responded on all stalking perception items. When the perpetrator was portrayed as a stranger, Malaysian and English participants were more likely to think the perpetrator's behaviour constituted stalking, necessitated police intervention, would cause the victim alarm or personal distress and fear violence. Participants from both countries also viewed the victim as being more responsible for the behaviour when the perpetrator and victim were portrayed as ex-partners rather than strangers or acquaintances. Second, males were less likely than females to judge the behaviour serious and were more likely to assign responsibility to the victim. Such findings reflecting typical relational biases are consistent with prior literature (A.J. Scott, 2020). The biased judgements have been explained with reference to the just world hypothesis (Lerner & Simmons, 1966). Third, there were cross-national differences in perceptions between Malaysia and England. Participants in Malaysia

were less likely than participants in England to perceive the perpetrator's behaviour as stalking, needing police intervention, and causing the victim alarm or personal distress, but more likely to view the victim as responsible. It is worth noting that the odds of Malaysians attributing responsibility to victims was 5.79 (95% CI, 3.81 to 8.80) times that of English participants, $\chi^2(1) = 67.50$, $p < .001$. These findings suggest that Malaysians are less aware of the severity of stalking perpetration and its consequences than English participants, given that Malaysia has not yet legislated against stalking (Joint Action Group for Gender Equality, 2018). This absence limits the options available to victims as authorities cannot take action when harassment behaviours are reported. This results in underreporting and drives the problem underground, preventing society from recognising how harmful stalking is. In England and Wales, the Protection of Freedoms Act (2012) extended earlier legislation, creating an offence of stalking. This is drafted broadly; exemplars include following, contacting, monitoring Internet use, loitering, and watching a person. A study by A. J. Scott et al. (2020) indicated that a United Kingdom sample demonstrated a rudimentary understanding of this legislation.

It is further argued that Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions may be able to explain these differences in perceptions. Malaysians, based in a collectivistic nation with high power distance orientation, may have the propensity to suppress expressions of emotions and behaviour to maintain social harmony. Several studies (e.g., Kennedy & Gorzalka, 2002; Mishra & Stair, 2019) reported that people from high power distance cultures are more tolerant of actions deemed to constitute harassment behaviours, as compared with those from low power distance cultures. It is however noted that while these explanations may account for the differences, they require corroboration as they have not been empirically tested.

The other findings are considered within an individual differences' perspective. Higher narcissism, psychopathy, and sadism scores were correlated with lower perceived

severity. However, regression analyses explored these patterns further and showed that, after accounting for nationality, perceiver gender, prior relationships, and HEXACO traits, only narcissism was related to lower perceived severity scores. This finding is in line with an earlier study by Asada et al. (2004) that found a positive relationship between narcissism and acceptability of obsessive relational intrusion behaviours. Narcissistic individuals tend to feel less empathic concern for others, showing an inability to vicariously experience emotions or distress (Wai & Tiliopoulos, 2012). The preoccupation with the self may affect their cognitive evaluation of the acceptability of harassment behaviours.

Openness was a positive predictor of perceived severity scores. Individuals high in openness are typically inquisitive about various matters, less conservative, and take an interest in others (Ashton & Lee, 2007), so arguably their intellectual curiosity enables them to more readily recognise behaviours that violate appropriate boundaries.

All Dark Tetrad traits were positively correlated with perceived victim responsibility, but regression analyses revealed that only narcissism was a significant predictor. Indeed, studies have found a relationship between narcissism and victim-blaming attitudes in the context of online abuse (G. G. Scott et al., 2020) and rape-supportive beliefs (Bushman et al., 2003). Narcissistic individuals tend to deflect blame when faced with conflicts and problems (e.g., Campbell et al., 2000), so they may shift responsibility away from the perpetrators onto the victims.

Higher emotionality was associated with lower perceived victim responsibility. Individuals with high emotionality scores, particularly on the sentimentality scale, are likely to feel stronger emotional bonds with others and have higher empathic sensitivity to the feelings of others (Ashton et al., 2014). They are therefore less inclined to attribute responsibility to stalking victims. Agreeableness significantly predicted higher perceived victim responsibility. The agreeableness domain encompasses forgivingness, gentleness,

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flexibility, and patience factors. In other words, those high on this scale are more willing to forgive the wrongs of others, are lenient in the judgement of others, would compromise and cooperate, and are better at controlling their temper in response to mistreatment. In the study by Bollmann et al. (2015), agreeableness was positively related to general just world belief – a finding that resonates the view that agreeableness is indicative of a tendency for friendly compliance (Nudelman, 2013). Although agreeableness is generally linked to positive interpersonal relationships, high agreeableness appears to predict vulnerability to interpersonal manipulation, as reported by Chung and Charles (2016) in their study among university and community samples. Arguably, highly agreeable people are likely to see grey areas in interpersonal behaviours and to excuse the stalking perpetrator for their actions.

## 6.    Limitations

The hypothetical scenarios in this study depicted a male pursuer and a female victim. As mentioned previously, there is evidence that female stalkers can be as violent as male stalkers, even though people tend to perceive harassment behaviour as more severe when perpetrated by a man instead of a woman. Therefore, generalisation of the results and conclusions should consider the role of perpetrator and victim gender.

The samples are not generalisable to broader populations and were not entirely comparable, as the Malaysian sample was larger and more varied than the English sample. There was also a marked difference in the proportion of male participants in both samples.

## 7.    Conclusions and Future Directions

These findings shed some light on why cross-national differences in perceived severity of stalking behaviours exist. This is one of the few studies that has examined the role of personality in stalking perceptions. The influence of personality on people's reactions to

harassment behaviour is vital for understanding reporting, and disclosure of violent behaviour, as well as willingness to intervene and support. Future research may consider the influence of other dispositional characteristics on the perceived acceptability of harassment behaviour. A manipulation of the abovementioned variables in future study designs allows researchers to examine the influence of various personal and situational factors, and their interactions on stalking perceptions in more detail.

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**Table 1**

*Means and Standard Deviations for the Five Perception Scale Items by Prior Relationship Conditions and Nationality*

| Condition | M (SD) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Stalking | Intervention | Alarm | Violence | Responsibility |
| **Malaysian** | | | | | |
| Stranger | 8.30 (2.26) | 7.12 (2.69) | 8.77 (1.95) | 7.93 (2.31) | 2.27 (2.63) |
| Acquaintance | 7.89 (2.22) | 7.11 (2.61) | 8.86 (1.69) | 8.15 (2.37) | 2.84 (2.98) |
| Ex-partner | 6.71 (3.00) | 5.32 (3.38) | 8.13 (2.29) | 7.17 (2.69) | 4.79 (3.02) |
| Male | 7.11 (2.74) | 5.95 (3.35) | 8.20 (2.23) | 7.28 (2.68) | 4.01 (3.17) |
| Female | 7.91 (2.49) | 6.81 (2.80) | 8.80 (1.86) | 8.01 (2.35) | 2.92 (2.96) |
| **English** | | | | | |
| Stranger | 8.93 (1.68) | 8.04 (1.58) | 9.35 (1.18) | 7.74 (1.84) | .69 (1.60) |
| Acquaintance | 9.04 (1.03) | 7.75 (1.80) | 9.30 (1.28) | 7.84 (1.65) | .65 (1.53) |
| Ex-partner | 8.36 (1.55) | 7.21 (2.21) | 9.09 (1.16) | 7.29 (1.88) | 1.27 (1.52) |
| Male | 8.50 (1.63) | 6.81 (1.87) | 8.81 (1.17) | 6.25 (2.05) | .81 (1.17) |
| Female | 8.80 (1.45) | 7.75 (1.88) | 9.29 (1.21) | 7.77 (1.71) | .87 (1.61) |
| **Overall** | | | | | |
| Stranger | 8.53 (2.08) | 7.47 (2.37) | 8.99 (1.72) | 7.86 (2.14) | 1.67 (2.41) |
| Acquaintance | 8.34 (1.93) | 7.37 (2.34) | 9.03 (1.55) | 8.03 (2.11) | 1.97 (2.73) |
| Ex-partner | 7.33 (2.67) | 6.03 (3.12) | 8.49 (2.00) | 7.22 (2.41) | 3.46 (3.08) |
| Male | 7.31 (2.65) | 6.07 (3.19) | 8.28 (2.12) | 7.13 (2.62) | 3.56 (3.17) |
| Female | 8.33 (2.12) | 7.25 (2.46) | 9.03 (1.61) | 7.89 (2.07) | 1.97 (2.63) |

*Note.* Malaysians (*N* = 269); English (*N* = 167)

**Table 2**
*Descriptive Data and Pearson's Correlations Among Variables of Interest*

| Variable | α | Mean (SD) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | Correlation matrix | | | | | | |
| 1. Honesty-Humility | .70 | 3.51 (.58) | – | .02 | .01 | .25* | .29* | .09 | -.44* | -.24* | -.50* | -.44* | .10 | -.004 |
| 2. Emotionality | .76 | 3.42 (.61) | | – | -.31* | -.23* | .08 | -.06 | -.13 | -.25* | -.22* | -.32* | .04 | -.26* |
| 3. Extraversion | .79 | 3.17 (.63) | | | – | .16* | .18* | .13 | -.07 | .52* | -.04 | -.11 | -.06 | .07 |
| 4. Agreeableness | .73 | 3.23 (.56) | | | | – | .06 | .15* | -.17* | -.03 | -.28* | -.17* | .04 | .12 |
| 5. Conscientiousness | .74 | 3.50 (.55) | | | | | – | .17* | -.28* | -.05 | -.40* | -.33* | .08 | -.11 |
| 6. Openness | .70 | 3.34 (.56) | | | | | | – | -.11 | .05 | -.03 | .01 | .10 | -.09 |
| 7. Machiavellianism | .75 | 3.13 (.61) | | | | | | | – | .33* | .49* | .38* | -.08 | .22* |
| 8. Narcissism | .72 | 2.62 (.56) | | | | | | | | – | .37* | .21* | -.21* | .29* |
| 9. Psychopathy | .71 | 2.24 (.58) | | | | | | | | | – | .69* | -.18* | .23* |
| 10. Sadism | .85 | 1.93 (.55) | | | | | | | | | | – | -.16* | .23* |
| 11. Perceived Severity | | 7.89 (1.88) | | | | | | | | | | | – | -.27* |
| 12. Perceived Responsibility | | 2.38 (2.86) | | | | | | | | | | | | – |

*Bonferroni corrected value: $p < .005$

**Table 3**

*Hierarchical Multiple Regression Predicting Perceptions of Behaviour Severity from Prior Relationships, Nationality, Gender, HEXACO traits, and Dark Tetrad traits*

| Variable | Model 1 B | Model 1 $\beta$ | Model 2 B | Model 2 $\beta$ | Model 3 B | Model 3 $\beta$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Constant | 7.77** | | 7.65** | | 8.15** | |
| Nationality[a] | -.50** | -.13 | -.57** | -.15 | -.47* | -.12 |
| Gender[b] | -.80** | -.19 | -.91** | -.21 | -.79** | -.18 |
| Prior Relationship[c] | | | | | | |
| Stranger | .97** | .24 | .98** | .25 | .99** | .25 |
| Acquaintance | .95** | .24 | .89** | .22 | .88** | .22 |
| HEXACO | | | | | | |
| Honesty-Humility | | | .30 | .09 | .22 | .07 |
| Emotionality | | | -.29 | -.09 | -.31 | -.10 |
| Extraversion | | | -.29 | -.10 | -.05 | -.02 |
| Agreeableness | | | .08 | .03 | .02 | .01 |
| Conscientiousness | | | -.04 | -.01 | -.06 | -.02 |
| Openness | | | .27 | .08 | .31* | .09 |
| Dark Tetrad | | | | | | |
| Machiavellianism | | | | | .34 | .11 |
| Narcissism | | | | | -.50* | -.15 |
| Psychopathy | | | | | -.18 | -.05 |
| Sadism | | | | | -.11 | -.03 |
| $R^2$ | .12 | | .15 | | .17 | |
| F | 14.84** | | 7.44** | | 6.07** | |
| $\Delta R^2$ | .12 | | .03 | | .02 | |
| $\Delta F$ | 14.84** | | 2.33* | | 2.39* | |

[a] Dummy coded as 1 = Malaysian, 0 = English

[b] Dummy coded as 1 = male, 0 = female

[c] 'Ex-partner' as the reference category

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

**Table 4**

*Hierarchical Multiple Regression Predicting Perceptions of Victim Responsibility from Prior Relationships, Nationality, Gender, HEXACO traits, and Dark Tetrad traits*

| Variable | Model 1 | | Model 2 | | Model 3 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | $B$ | $\beta$ | $B$ | $\beta$ | $B$ | $\beta$ |
| Constant | 1.87** | | 4.08* | | -1.00 | |
| Nationality[a] | 2.19** | .37 | 2.14** | .37 | 1.61** | .27 |
| Gender[b] | .94** | .14 | .62* | .10 | .40 | .06 |
| Prior Relationship[c] | | | | | | |
|   Stranger | -1.82** | -.30 | -1.78** | -.29 | -1.77** | -.29 |
|   Acquaintance | -1.49** | -.25 | -1.40** | -.23 | -1.37** | -.23 |
| HEXACO | | | | | | |
|   Honesty-Humility | | | -.29 | -.06 | .20 | .04 |
|   Emotionality | | | -.57* | -.12 | -.45 | -.10 |
|   Extraversion | | | .06 | .01 | -.31 | -.07 |
|   Agreeableness | | | .42 | .08 | .59** | .12 |
|   Conscientiousness | | | .09 | .02 | .16 | .03 |
|   Openness | | | -.30 | -.06 | -.37 | -.07 |
| Dark Tetrad | | | | | | |
|   Machiavellianism | | | | | .11 | .02 |
|   Narcissism | | | | | .92** | .18 |
|   Psychopathy | | | | | .20 | .04 |
|   Sadism | | | | | .36 | .07 |
| $R^2$ | .27 | | .29 | | .32 | |
| $F$ | 39.29** | | 17.71** | | 14.16** | |
| $\Delta R^2$ | .27 | | .03 | | .03 | |
| $\Delta F$ | 39.29** | | 2.71* | | 4.02** | |

[a] Dummy coded as 1 = Malaysian, 0 = English

[b] Dummy coded as 1 = male, 0 = female

[c] 'Ex-partner' as the reference category

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