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**Dark Minds, Sinister Actions: Linking Dark Triad Traits
to Stalking Attitudes**

**Mörka Sinnen, Ondskefulla Gärningar: Kopplingen
Mellan Mörka Triaden Egenskaper och Stalkningattityder**

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Bachelor thesis in psychology VT24

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between the Dark Triad personality traits—Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy—and attitudes toward stalking. Utilising a cross-sectional survey design, the research involved $N=165$ participants who completed scales measuring both Dark Triad traits and their attitudes towards stalking. Understanding the psychological and social foundations that influence such attitudes is crucial given the complexity of stalking as a social issue.

The results showed that individuals with stronger Dark Triad traits had more positive attitudes toward stalking, which supported the Hypothesis. No gender differences in dark triad traits or in attitudes toward stalking were observed. This raises questions regarding previous research that predict distinct patterns in the expression of socially aversive traits among men and women, and challenges the societal conception of stalking being a gendered crime. However, due to the limited sample size, the results regarding gender should be interpreted with caution.

The study suggests the potential importance of examining the direct impact of Dark Triad traits on attitudes toward stalking. Understanding that individuals with these traits may view stalking more favourably could be useful in informing the development of targeted interventions and policies. For instance, law enforcement and legal professionals might benefit from this knowledge by considering specialised training programs that help in identifying and managing individuals exhibiting these traits. Future studies should also consider cultural and societal factors, as well as additional personality dimensions, to better understand the dynamics influencing these attitudes.

Keywords: Dark Triad, stalking, cyberstalking, attitudes, gender

Sammanfattning

Denna studie undersöker förhållandet mellan den mörka triadens personlighetsdrag —Machiavellianism, narcissism och psykopati—och attityder till stalkning. Studien var en tvärsnittsundersökning med $N=165$ deltagare som fyllde i skalor som mätte både mörka triaden-egenskaper och deras attityder till stalkning. Att förstå de psykologiska och sociala grunderna som påverkar sådana attityder är avgörande med tanke på komplexiteten i stalkning som en social fråga.

Resultaten visade att individer med starkare drag av den mörka triaden hade mer positiva attityder till stalkning, vilket stödde hypotesen. Inga könsskillnader i drag från den mörka triaden eller i attityder till stalkning observerades. Detta väcker frågor om tidigare forskning som förutspår olika mönster i uttrycket av socialt aversiva egenskaper bland män och kvinnor, och utmanar den samhälleliga uppfattningen att stalkning är ett könsrelaterat brott. På grund av den begränsade urvalsstorleken bör dock resultaten avseende kön tolkas med försiktighet.

Studien visar på den potentiella betydelsen av att undersöka den direkta effekten av mörka triaden-drag på attityder till stalkning. Att förstå att individer med dessa egenskaper kan se mer positivt på stalkning kan vara användbart för att informera om utvecklingen av riktade insatser och policyer. Exempelvis kan brottsbekämpande och juridisk personal dra nytta av denna kunskap genom att överväga specialiserade utbildningsprogram som hjälper till att identifiera och hantera individer som uppvisar dessa drag. Framtida studier bör också beakta kulturella och samhälleliga faktorer samt ytterligare personlighetsdimensioner för att bättre förstå den dynamik som påverkar dessa attityder.

Nyckelord: mörka triaden, stalkning, cyberstalkning, attityder, kön

Acknowledgements

On behalf of our bachelor's thesis group at Lund University, we express our gratitude to all who played a crucial role in the completion of our study on stalking behaviour. This academic endeavour would not have been possible without the invaluable contributions from our survey participants, who generously dedicated their time to provide the essential data for our research. Their participation was vital for maintaining the integrity and validity of our findings, and for this, we are profoundly grateful.

We extend our special thanks to our supervisor, Una Tellhed PhD, for her expert guidance and support throughout this research journey. Her mentorship was crucial in helping us address the intricacies of this sensitive topic, thereby reinforcing our dedication to rigorous and ethical research practices.

We are deeply grateful to Magnus Lindén for kindly providing us with the Swedish version of the Dark Triad scale, an essential tool that greatly contributed to our research. Lastly, we want to thank our family and friends for their persistent belief in our success and for their unwavering support, especially our friend Bakir Nahi, whose encouragement was invaluable.

As we present this thesis, we reflect on the substantial knowledge we have gained and the spirit of collaboration that has marked our journey. We are eager to contribute to the ongoing discourse on stalking behaviour, and we hope our findings will be beneficial for both scholarly and practical applications.

Sincerely,

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Dark Minds, Sinister Actions: Linking Dark Triad Traits to Stalking Attitudes

Throughout history, narratives have been abundant with tales of individuals deeply enamoured, often portrayed as heroes persisting against all odds for love. These stories commonly glorify the act of fighting for romantic affection as an ultimate testament to one's devotion. However, this romanticization raises significant psychological and ethical questions: At what point does the pursuit of love cease to be endearing, and instead become invasive or disturbing?

Stalking, a complex and often misunderstood phenomenon, is increasingly recognized as a significant social problem that transcends cultural, legal, and technological boundaries. Traditionally viewed through obsessive behaviours and unwanted pursuits, stalking is a multifaceted issue that manifests in various forms ranging from physical stalking to cyberstalking (Bélanger et al., 2021; Spitzberg & Cupach, 2007). The concept of stalking covers a variety of definitions that reflect diverse perspectives within both academic literature and legal frameworks. According to scholars such as Black et al. (2011), Dietz and Martin (2007), and Tjaden and Thoennes (1998), stalking is commonly defined as a series of intentional actions aimed at a specific individual. These actions include repeated sighting or physical proximity, unsolicited communication, and either explicit or implicit threats.

This study seeks to understand current attitudes towards stalking and to explore its possible connections with the Dark Triad personality traits, Machiavellianism, narcissism and psychopathy. We will also test for potential gender differences in dark triad traits and attitudes towards stalking.

Defining Stalking and Cyberstalking

The definitions of stalking show significant variance among researchers and legislation but generally encompass unwanted, harassing, and threatening behaviours that are recurrent (Spitzberg & Cupach, 2007). Unlike most criminal activities, which consist of clearly illegal acts, stalking often involves actions that are legally permissible in isolation but are considered criminal when they form a pattern that a reasonable person would find threatening, harassing, and frightening (Fox et al., 2011). However, several definitions stipulate that the victim must experience fear, while others do not require this emotional response (Green & Yamawaki, 2024). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2020) described stalking, also referred to as obsessive relational intrusion (ORI), as a pattern of repeated, unwanted attention and contact by a partner that instil fear or concern for one's safety or the safety of someone close to the victim. Furthermore, cultural narratives and societal attitudes often misunderstand or trivialise stalking, incorrectly labelling it as romantic

or passionate persistence. This minimization can lead to underreporting and underestimating the serious nature of stalking (Becker et al., 2021).

Moreover, Mullen, Pathe, and Purcell (2001) broadly define stalking as a pattern of repeated and unwanted contacts that are perceived as intrusive by the recipient, causing them to feel distressed or fearful. Cupach and Spitzberg (2004), along with Tjaden and Thoennes (1998), also note that when the persistent pursuit of a relationship induces fear in the person who is rejecting the advances, it then qualifies as stalking. Collectively, these descriptions emphasise the complex and multifaceted nature of stalking, highlighting its impact on victims and the challenge of defining such behaviours within legal and psychological contexts.

With the advent of digital technology, stalking behaviours have increasingly migrated online, a phenomenon known as cyberstalking (Smoker & March, 2017). This modern phenomenon utilises technology such as social media, phone calls, messaging, and online surveillance, to harass or frighten victims. Importantly, while cyberstalking does not always include direct physical contact or proximity, it often complements offline stalking methods, creating a pervasive, technology-facilitated continuum of harassment (Cupach et al., 2011).

In recent years, stalking has increasingly become a focus of public and academic interest, emerging as a significant social issue (Miller, 2012). This concern arises from the profound impact stalking has on victims, both physically and psychologically, as well as the actual and perceived effects on their safety and security. Victims often live in constant fear of being watched, harmed, or followed, which can lead to social isolation. This isolation not only affects the individuals involved but also has detrimental effects on society as a whole (Pathé & Mullen, 1997; Spitzberg & Cupach, 2003).

This heightened focus reflects growing awareness of its prevalence and the profound impact it exerts on victims' lives, prompting a critical examination of its psychological, social, and legal dimensions. As this issue continues to unfold within the public discourse, it invites a deeper understanding of its mechanisms and consequences, both from a societal and individual perspective.

Dark Triad

The Dark Triad, comprising the personality traits of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy, was first articulated by Paulhus and Williams (2002). They highlighted these traits as the most empirically recognized among socially aversive characteristics. In their article they underscore that there is some overlap among these dark personalities. The common features include aggressiveness, duplicity, social malevolence, self-promotion tendencies, and emotional coldness, each present to varying extents across the three traits.

However, the depiction of each of the dark traits are described in further detail by Jones and Paulhus (2014). In their characterisation, Machiavellianism and psychopathy are differentiated by their levels of impulsivity; Machiavellians exhibit strategic thinking and control, whereas psychopaths display a notable lack of self-control. Narcissism is distinct from both in its drive for ego reinforcement, as opposed to the primarily instrumental or material gains sought by the other two traits. Further delineation of these traits reveals that Machiavellianism involves manipulateness, a focus on reputation building, callous affect, and a strategic-calculating orientation. Psychopathy is marked by recklessness and thrill-seeking, alongside key characteristics of callousness and impulsivity. Narcissism, meanwhile, is primarily characterised by grandiosity, encompassing a sense of entitlement and an exaggerated perception of one's abilities (Jones & Paulhus, 2014). This nuanced understanding provides a clearer picture of the distinct yet overlapping nature of the Dark Triad.

Dark Triad and Stalking

The relationship between stalking and the Dark Triad has been observed in numerous articles, put under scrutiny in varying conditions and contexts. For instance, Smoker and March (2017) found that each dark trait significantly predicted engagement in intimate partner cyberstalking (IPCS), particularly among individuals with higher scores. They compared these traits to previous research to elucidate their motivations. Jones and Paulhus (2010) explained that trait narcissism leads individuals to engage in IPCS to maintain control in relationships. The intimate knowledge possessed by their partners poses a threat, prompting narcissists to resort to IPCS to gain dominance. Coyne and Thomas (2008) suggested that psychopathy is associated with predatory and instrumental aggression, rather than emotional. Individuals high in psychopathy exhibit high-risk behaviours, including emotional manipulation and game-playing in relationships. Cyberstalking allows them to engage in malevolent romantic game-playing while maintaining distance from emotional consequences. Machiavellianism, as explained by Abell et al. (2016), involves emotional manipulation in intimate relationships, with individuals often perceiving themselves as being manipulated. Jonason and Kavanagh (2010) added that Machiavellians employ strategic mating strategies to meet their own needs within relationships. Consequently, distrust in a partner, combined with Machiavellian traits, may drive online surveillance as a defence strategy, appealing to the methodical nature of strategic Machiavellians.

Branković et al. (2023) found when examining the relationship between dark traits and different forms of stalking, that the dark traits correlated with cyberstalking. Psychopathy was

associated with more direct forms, while narcissism and Machiavellianism were linked to covert stalking tactics. Furthermore, their study found that Machiavellianism and narcissism were associated with subtle, untrackable tactics aimed at collecting information about the victim, potentially reflecting distrust or manipulative intentions. In contrast, psychopathy was related to more severe, in-person stalking behaviours, indicative of a higher tendency toward antisocial behaviour.

Stiff (2019) established, when investigating the concept of Facebook surveillance in relation to the dark triad, that there is a link between the dark traits and the various forms of Facebook surveillance, a branch in cyberstalking. Moreover, Stiff found that Machiavellianism was associated with greater surveillance, driven by an endorsement of gossip as trait intensity increased. Psychopathy was linked with Facebook investigating, driven by intolerance to uncertainty and the pleasurable component of gathering information without the target's knowledge. However, narcissism did not predict either type of surveillance, suggesting that narcissists are more concerned with others' reactions to their own profiles rather than gathering information about others.

The concept of the Dark Triad partially forms the foundation of this study, guiding the investigation into the relationship between attitudes toward stalking. To fully explore the scope of this research and gain deeper insights into these dynamics, it is essential to consider the gender perspective.

Gender Differences

To which extent men and women are psychologically different or similar has been the subject of a long debate. The sociocultural theory offers an explanation for the inequalities and segregation of labour based on gender, thereby providing a more profound comprehension of a mutual understanding of gender (Hyde, 2014).

In their 2012 research, Lyndon et al. explored the potential differences in attitudes towards stalking between men and women. Initially hypothesising gender-based differences, their findings ultimately revealed no significant disparity in stalking behaviours across genders.

Moreover, the research highlights the role of control as a central motivator in stalking behaviours. The studies suggest that gender significantly influences the likelihood of engaging in intimate partner stalking, with women showing a higher tendency for such behaviours (Brewster, 2003). This observation challenges traditional gender stereotypes associated with stalking. Building on previous research, studies suggest that women are more

inclined to engage in cyberstalking and they often employ discreet methods like phone calls and digital monitoring to keep tabs on their partners' activities (Smoker & March, 2017).

Subsequent studies have also delved into the intersection of gender and dark personality traits in relation to stalking. A study by March et al. (2020) established a strong positive correlation between controlling behaviours in relationships and the perpetration of intimate partner cyberstalking (IPCS). Their results affirmed the hypothesis that such controlling behaviours are predictive of IPCS, thus reinforcing and extending previous research that connects physical stalking and controlling dynamics within intimate relationships (March et al., 2020).

In their meta-analysis on the Dark Triad, Muris et al. (2017) uncovered notable gender differences. Beginning with narcissism, their analysis revealed consistent findings across studies, indicating that men tend to score higher on measures of narcissism, particularly in facets characterised by social aversiveness such as exploitativeness and entitlement. This suggests a gender-based disparity in the manifestation of narcissistic traits, with men exhibiting a greater propensity towards certain aspects of narcissism. Turning to psychopathy, while quantitative analyses regarding gender differences are limited, Muris et al. (2017) noted that descriptive reviews consistently point to a higher prevalence of psychopathic traits in men across diverse populations. This observation aligns with broader trends indicating a gender skew in the prevalence of psychopathy, with men exhibiting a higher propensity towards psychopathic behaviours compared to women. In their examination of Machiavellianism, they found empirical evidence suggesting a greater occurrence of Machiavellian traits among men. This finding underscores the gendered nature of Machiavellian behaviours, with men exhibiting a higher tendency towards strategic manipulation and exploitation in interpersonal relationships.

Furthermore, the meta-analysis conducted by Muris et al. (2017) included an extensive literature search on gender differences pertaining to the Dark Triad. This comprehensive review encompassed 50 studies comprising 65 samples and a total of 25,930 participants. Across these studies, a consistent pattern emerged: men consistently scored higher on measures of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy compared to women. Of particular significance is the robust association between psychopathy and gender, with Muris et al. (2017) suggesting that this may be attributed to the link between psychopathy and overt antisocial behaviours influenced by biological and social factors such as testosterone levels and gender roles. This underscores the complex interplay between gender, personality traits,

and societal influences in shaping the expression of psychopathic tendencies. Nonetheless, their meta-analysis highlights the fact of gender differences in the Dark Triad.

One of the most significant documented psychological distinctions between men and women pertains to their interests, men generally exhibit a stronger preference for engaging with objects, while women tend to be more oriented towards interpersonal interactions (Su et al., 2009). Beyond this, the psychological disparities between the sexes appear to be minimal (Hyde, 2014). Research into gender differences in aggression suggests that much of human behaviour can be attributed to social learning (Hyde, 2014). Physical aggression shows a moderate difference favouring males (Archer, 2004), but this difference is context-dependent. In settings where individuals feel unmonitored, men and women exhibit similar behaviours, indicating the significant influence of social roles on aggression (Lightdale & Prentice, 1994). While boys typically engage more in physical aggression, girls show slightly higher levels of relational aggression, though the difference is small (Archer, 2004). This highlights that the size of the gender difference in aggression varies by type and context. However, what specific differences exist, if any, in stalking behaviours and attitudes across genders?

In the research conducted by Miglietta and Acquadro Maran (2017), notable gender differences were uncovered in the perception of stalking behaviours. The study found that women are more adept than men at recognizing a wider array of behaviours as stalking, including both overt aggression and more nuanced forms of contact-seeking such as persistent messaging or phone calls, which might not be universally recognized as forms of stalking. The study further explores how this broader awareness among women suggests a heightened sensitivity to behaviours that may be perceived as invasive or threatening. Additionally, women were more likely to attribute psychological symptoms like fear and anxiety to victims of stalking, possibly reflecting a greater empathetic response or influenced by a higher likelihood of women being victims themselves, which may enhance their attunement to the repercussions of such behaviours.

Moreover, the study indicates that women tend to advocate for more proactive coping strategies in response to stalking. These strategies include seeking psychological support, involving law enforcement, and maintaining vigilance about the severity of stalking without underestimating its impact. Such approaches might reflect a perception of stalking as a serious threat, as well as a preference for community- and support-oriented responses among women (Miglietta et al., 2017).

On the contrary, the research highlights that men, particularly those displaying higher levels of hostile sexism, are less likely to acknowledge the psychological suffering associated

with stalking. Hostile sexism, characterised by antagonistic attitudes towards women, may diminish the perceived legitimacy of the emotional trauma caused by stalking, leading to underrecognition of its impact. Men with pronounced hostile sexist attitudes might downplay the severity of stalking, possibly due to a deep-seated undervaluation of women's experiences and vulnerabilities (Miglietta et.al., 2017).

The study further explores the role of sexism in shaping perceptions of stalking. Individuals with elevated levels of hostile sexism are less inclined to categorise contact-seeking behaviours as stalking and show reduced empathy towards the psychological distress of victims. In contrast, those with higher levels of benevolent sexism—which involves a paternalistic, protective attitude towards women—tend to view stalkers as socially maladjusted yet are more likely to endorse external assistance and escape strategies as effective responses (Miglietta et.al., 2017).

Building on this understanding, this study seeks to understand current attitudes towards stalking by examining potential gender differences in these attitudes. As per Crime Prevention Council (Brottsförebyggande rådet, BRÅ; 2024), women are more inclined than men to report experiencing harassment, albeit the gender gap has diminished over time. It is important to note that these statistics rely on self-reported data and encompass a broader range of behaviours beyond stalking. Furthermore, there is a lack of clear data regarding the perpetrators of these acts or the incidence of arrests in Sweden. Besides investigating gender differences in stalking, it is important to understand the motivations that underlie stalking behaviour. This leads us to explore why some individuals persist in their stalking efforts despite clear signs of non-reciprocation or relationship viability.

Relational Goal Pursuit

Relational Goal Pursuit (RGP) theory is a psychological framework that explains why individuals may persistently pursue a relationship even when it is clear that the relationship is no longer viable or reciprocated (Cupach et.al., 2011). This theory is particularly relevant in understanding behaviours in romantic contexts, especially in situations involving breakups or unrequited love. According to RGP theory, relationships can be seen as goal-directed pursuits. When someone views a relationship as a goal, they assign significant importance to the attainment of this relationship, much like one would prioritise achieving career success or personal milestones (Cupach et al., 2011).

In examining the dynamics of terminated romantic relationships, it becomes evident that persistent attempts at reconciliation can profoundly affect both the pursuer and the rejecting partner (Baumeister, Wotman, & Stillwell, 1993; Dunn, 1999). Partners who are the

targets of reconciliation efforts often experience feelings of remorse, irritation, and disturbance, highlighting the need to understand the motivations behind such persistent pursuits. The severity of these reconciliation attempts spans a broad spectrum, from frequent interactions like calls and messages to more severe measures such as surveillance and threats. Such relentless actions generally heighten the distress linked to the end of the relationship for both individuals involved (Baumeister, Wotman, & Stillwell, 1993; Dunn, 1999).

The forcefulness of ongoing efforts becomes evident when reconciliation is not mutual, sometimes inciting fear and categorising the conduct as stalking (Cupach et al., 2011). Studies show that a substantial number of people who face harassment and stalking after a breakup are genuinely concerned about their well-being, which underscores the severe consequences of these relentless pursuits (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). According to RGP theory, those who persist in reconciliation view relationships as objectives, frequently assigning excessive importance to these goals, perceiving them as the sole routes to broader aspirations such as achieving life happiness. Such beliefs lead to persistent contemplation, intense negative feelings, and a fixation on both the individual and the relationship, justifying their continued actions and intensifying their efforts (Cupach et al., 2011).

Several factors have been identified as predictors of persistence in relationship pursuit by Cupach et al. (2011). Primarily, rumination about the adverse consequences of losing a desired relationship stimulates actions aimed at recovering it. Furthermore, self-efficacy, or the belief in one's capability to rekindle the relationship, impacts both the desirability and attainability of the relational goal, influencing the frequency and intensity of pursuit behaviours. Moreover, self-efficacy, or the belief in one's ability to rekindle the relationship, influences both the appeal and the feasibility of the relational goal, impacting the extent and vigour of pursuit behaviours (Cupach et al., 2011). The perceived interconnectedness within the relationship, or relationship linking, further influences the persistence of pursuit, especially in scenarios where breakups are one-sided (Lannutti & Cameron, 2002).

Recent research extends our understanding of the typical human response to relationship endings, showcasing a widespread tendency to persist in efforts, regardless of the strategy adopted (Cupach et al., 2011). This finding supports the predictions of the RGP model, highlighting an individual's reluctance to proceed forward and their continuous attempts to reestablish emotional closeness and connection with a former partner (Spitzberg & Cupach, 2014). This phenomenon underscores how the dissolution of a relationship, especially when not initiated by the individual, significantly magnifies their emotional and

cognitive focus on their former partner and the desperate attempts to salvage the relationship (Cupach et al., 2011).

This intense focus often leads to the employment of tactics known as obsessive relational intrusion (ORI), whereby one party persistently tries to re-establish intimacy, regardless of the other's current desires or feelings (Spitzberg & Cupach, 2014). This behaviour reflects a complex interplay between the deep-seated pain of separation and the strong desire to reclaim a lost partner, revealing the intricate dynamics involved in adjusting to life after a relationship ends. Often, this situation escalates into behaviours that could be considered overly persistent or even harassing.

Furthermore, the findings call for a deeper examination of the psychological frameworks and the tangible impacts such behaviours have on everyone involved. By gaining a more profound understanding of these dynamics, it is possible to develop more effective interventions and support systems (Spitzberg & Cupach, 2014). These could not only help individuals process and move beyond the pain of relationship dissolution in healthier ways but also prevent the escalation of these behaviours into more destructive forms of pursuit. Such research is pivotal in crafting nuanced support strategies that address both the emotional turmoil and the practical challenges faced by those navigating the end of intimate relationships. This extended insight is essential for guiding more effective support and intervention mechanisms, ultimately fostering a better understanding that could enhance the well-being of all affected parties (Spitzberg & Cupach, 2014). In understanding the motivations behind stalking behaviour, the mentioned perspectives aid in investigating the associations between gender, the Dark Triad, and attitudes toward stalking.

Hypotheses

Based on our conducted literature review for this study, due to the exploration of stalking, the Dark Triad, and gender differences, we arrived at three hypotheses to ground the exploration of our research in:

Hypothesis 1: Men will score higher on the Dark Triad than women.

Hypothesis 2: Men will perceive stalking as more acceptable as compared to women.

Hypothesis 3: Higher scores on the Dark Triad is associated with a more acceptable perception of stalking.

Method

Design and Procedure

The study employed a cross-sectional survey design to test the relationship between Dark triad traits and attitudes towards stalking, and test for gender differences in the factors. The data was collected with a digital survey in the Sunet survey platform. Prior to introducing the survey questions the participants were educated about the study's purpose, ethical aspects, and informed consent. The survey consisted of 65 statements and took approximately 15 minutes to complete. The sole inclusion criterion was a minimum age of 18 years. Participation did not necessitate prior relationship experience, as the scale exclusively measured attitudes, without delving into personal history. Accordingly, the survey began with two demographic questions concerning gender (woman, man) and age (e.g., 18-24). The first part of the survey consisted of 38 questions regarding attitudes towards stalking, seven of which concerned cyberstalking. The second part of the survey comprised 27 statements related to the Dark triad. The survey concluded with contact information to help and support organisations.

A comprehensive strategy was adopted to disseminate the survey link across various digital platforms, including groups on Facebook, Instagram, Familjeliv, and similar forums thereby allowing access to a wide-ranging audience. Direct data collection efforts were also undertaken by setting up a station in Malmö city during a local festival. Promotional posters were used to engage festival-goers, effectively drawing their attention and encouraging survey participation. Additionally, the reach of data collection was expanded by involving personal networks, enlisting friends and family members to contribute to the survey. This diverse methodological approach, which combined both online dissemination and personal interaction, was crucial in achieving thorough and varied data collection, thereby enhancing the robustness and breadth of the study's findings. The survey was available for 10 days and gathered 176 respondents, however, among these 165 contained complete answers.

Participants

The study sample consisted of men and women living in Sweden, each of whom was required to be a minimum of 18 years of age. Out of the $N=165$ participants, $n=55$ (33.3%) identified as men and $n=110$ (66.6%) as women. The majority of our sample, 60.1%, ranged from 18 to 30 years of age, with most falling between the ages of 25 and 30. Beyond that, 35.1% of our sample ranged from 31 to 50 years of age, and lastly, an exceedingly small percentage of 0.04% our sample ranged from 51 to 70.

Material

In order to measure the participants' attitudes toward stalking, we employed two scales. The first scale “Stalking-Related Attitude Questionnaire”, SRAQ (McKeon et al., 2015), assessed attitudes about in-person stalking, while the other scale, “Intimate Partner Cyber Stalking Scale”, IPCS (Smoker & March, 2017), measured one's tendencies toward cyberstalking, in order to obtain attitudes regarding cyberstalking. Some statements in the first scale (SRAQ) were revised to achieve gender-neutral language by omitting specific pronouns. Additionally, emotionally charged words, primarily "stalking," were rephrased to ensure neutrality and sensitivity in the terminology used throughout the scale. However, we retained the term “stalking” in certain statements because it was well-suited to specific contexts. Furthermore, certain words in the second scale (IPCS) were exchanged in order to stay contemporary with the vocabulary used in today’s society, for instance “online accounts” were exchanged with “social media”.

The first scale used was the “Stalking-Related Attitude Questionnaire” (SRAQ) developed by McKeon et al. (2015). The questionnaire was translated into Swedish through a meticulous back-translation process conducted by the authors of the current study, which involved several rounds of refinement (see Appendix 1). This scale comprised 30 items, each with five response options. Examples of statements are *“What one person may see as stalking, another may see as romantic”* and *“Repeatedly following someone, making phone calls and leaving gifts doesn’t actually hurt anyone”*. The scale ranged from 1=“Completely disagree” to 5=“Completely agree”.

The second scale that was used was “The Intimate Partner Cyber Stalking Scale” (IPCS) by Smoker and March (2017), and underwent the same back-translation process as the previous scale (see Appendix 2). This scale consisted of eight items with five answer options. Examples of statements are *“If my partner is going out, I will usually check their online accounts to see what they're up to”* and *“I have used or considered using phone apps to track my partner's activities”*. The scale ranged from 1=“Completely disagree” to 5=“Completely agree”.

A reliability analysis was conducted for each scale to measure internal consistency. The SRAQ scale obtained a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.82 (see Table 4), indicating good internal consistency, while the IPCS achieved a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.77 (see Table 5), reflecting acceptable internal consistency. Typically, a Cronbach's alpha value above 0.7 is considered acceptable, and values above 0.8 are deemed good (Navarro & Foxcroft, 2022). Additionally, the two scales were combined to measure overall attitudes toward stalking in our analyses,

and therefore we measured the internal consistency with the scales combined. The two merged scales resulted in a Cronbach's alpha of 0.86 (see Table 6), which signifies good reliability. This high alpha value suggests that the combined scale consistently measures the underlying construct of attitudes toward stalking.

In order to measure the participants' dark personality traits the Swedish version of the "Short Dark Triad" (SD3) was employed, translated through a back-translation process by Lindén and Dåderman (2014). The measure was originally developed in 2013 by Jones and Paulhus (see Appendix 3). This scale consists of 27 items, nine items per personality trait, with five answer options. Examples of statements to measure Machiavellianism are "*It's not wise to tell your secrets*" and "*You should wait for the right time to get back at people*". Examples of statements to assess narcissism are "*Many group activities tend to be dull without me*" and "*I insist on getting the respect I deserve*". Lastly, examples of statements to measure psychopathy are "*People who mess with me always regret it*" and "*I'll say anything to get what I want*". The scale ranges from 1="Disagree strongly" to 5="Agree strongly". In order to conduct a reliability analysis certain items needed to be reversed, which obtained a Cronbach's alpha of 0.82 (see Table 7), suggesting respectable reliability.

Ethical considerations

In conducting our survey, we adhered to established ethical principles for research involving human subjects. At the beginning of the survey, we obtained informed consent by clearly describing the study's purpose and ensuring that participants understood their participation was entirely voluntary. In the survey, participants were initially given binary gender options. However, we emphasised that what truly matters is one's self-identified gender, not their legal gender. We emphasised that they could withdraw from the survey at any time without any consequences. To protect the participants' privacy, we guaranteed anonymity and collected no information that could be traced back to any individual.

Considering the sensitivity of the topic, which focused on stalking, we restricted participation to individuals over the age of 18. This age limit was set to ensure that participants were capable of fully understanding the implications of the study and the sensitive nature of the subject matter.

We also provided information about available help and support organisations at the end of the survey. Contact details were given to ensure that participants could access assistance if needed, reinforcing our commitment to participant well-being throughout the study process. The survey was administered using the Sunet survey platform, which was selected for its robust privacy and security features.

Results

Preliminary analyses

The descriptive analyses indicated a slightly leftward skew for dark triad (SD3) scores, with a tendency towards a normal distribution. In contrast, scores for attitudes towards stalking (SRAQ) and attitudes towards cyberstalking (IPCS) showed a rightward skew. The median score for both SD3 and SRAQ + IPCS was approximately 2.0, with few outliers, primarily on the higher end of the scales. We identified outliers using z-scores in Jamovi, with values exceeding ± 3.29 considered significant outliers (Mowbrey et al., 2019). These outliers were adjusted to control for influence and leverage in the dataset (see Table 3).

SD3 scores demonstrated a normal distribution both visually and according to the Shapiro-Wilk test, $p = 0.134$. In contrast, overall attitudes towards stalking did not follow a normal distribution, with a significant Shapiro-Wilk p -value of < 0.001 . Consequently, we used Spearman's rho in the correlation matrix and the Mann-Whitney U test instead of the independent t-test for analyses, as these non-parametric tests do not assume normality.

To compare the mean values between groups, a t-test was conducted for normally distributed data, while the Mann-Whitney U test was employed for non-normally distributed data, providing a clear rationale for the statistical methods used.

Hypothesis 1 and 2: Gender differences

To test for gender differences in the Dark Triad, we conducted an independent samples t-test. The result did not support Hypothesis 1, as the analysis showed no significant gender difference, $t = 0.927$, $df = 163$, $p = 0.355$, Cohen's $d = 0.153$.

Similarly, the Mann-Whitney U test showed no significant gender difference in attitudes towards stalking and cyberstalking, $U = 2873$, $p = 0.599$, $r = 0.0504$. Thus, Hypothesis 2 was not supported. See Table 1 for means and standard deviation in both variables.

Table 1, Group descriptives - Means and standard deviations

Group Descriptives						
	Group	N	Mean	Median	SD	SE
ATT + CYB Mean	Male	55	2.08	2.05	0.368	0.0496
	Female	110	2.05	1.97	0.383	0.0365
DT Mean	Male	55	2.22	2.19	0.406	0.0548
	Female	110	2.16	2.15	0.453	0.0432

This table presents descriptive statistics for two study groups. For each gender within the attitudes toward stalking and cyberstalking, ATT + CYB (SRAQ and IPCS scales) and Dark Triad, DT (SD3 scale) groups, the number of participants (N), mean, median, standard deviation (SD), and standard error (SE) are displayed. Men and women are represented separately to highlight potential gender differences within each group. The low means showcase a general disapproval of stalking behaviours irrespective of gender.

Hypothesis 3: Relation between Attitudes toward stalking and the Dark Triad

We conducted Spearman's correlation to test Hypothesis 3, that the dark triad traits are related to stalking attitudes. The results showed a moderate to strong, significant positive relationship between the variables, $\rho = 0.553$, $p < .001$, which supported the hypothesis. This correlation suggests that individuals with higher dark triad traits are more likely to exhibit pronounced attitudes towards stalking. See table 2 below.

Table 2, Correlation matrix

Correlation Matrix		DT Mean	ATT + CYB Mean	MACH Mean	NARC Mean	PSYC Mean
DT Mean	Spearman's rho	—				
	df	—				
	p-value	—				
	N	—				
ATT + CYB Mean	Spearman's rho	0.553 ^{***}	—			
	df	163	—			
	p-value	< .001	—			
	N	165	—			
MACH Mean	Spearman's rho	0.731 ^{***}	0.420 ^{***}	—		
	df	163	163	—		
	p-value	< .001	< .001	—		
	N	165	165	—		
NARC Mean	Spearman's rho	0.754 ^{***}	0.455 ^{***}	0.295 ^{***}	—	
	df	163	163	163	—	
	p-value	< .001	< .001	< .001	—	
	N	165	165	165	—	
PSYC Mean	Spearman's rho	0.688 ^{***}	0.349 ^{***}	0.357 ^{***}	0.363 ^{***}	—
	df	163	163	163	163	—
	p-value	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	—
	N	165	165	165	165	—

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

Correlation Matrix displaying Spearman's rho values between the means of Dark Triad, DT (SD3 scale), attitudes towards stalking, ATT (SRAQ scale) + cyberstalking, CYB (IPCS scale), machiavellianism (MACH), narcissism (NARC), and psychopathy (PSYC). The table includes correlation coefficients, degrees of freedom (df), p-values, and sample sizes (N) for each comparison. Significant correlations are denoted with asterisks: * indicates $p < .05$, ** indicates $p < .01$, and *** indicates $p < .001$. All correlations are based on a sample size of 165 participants.

The correlation matrix in Table 2 explores the interrelationships on Dark Triad (SD3) mean scores and attitudes towards stalking and cyberstalking (SRAQ and IPCS scales) mean scores, along with the individual traits of Machiavellianism (MACH), Narcissism (NARC), and Psychopathy (PSYC).

There were also correlations between overall attitudes towards stalking (SRAQ and IPCS scales) and each dark triad subscale. Specifically, the correlations with Machiavellianism, $\rho = 0.420$, $p < .001$, Narcissism, $\rho = 0.455$, $p < .001$, and Psychopathy, $\rho =$

0.349, $p < .001$, suggest that higher levels of these traits are associated with more positive attitudes and behaviours related to stalking and cyberstalking.

Discussion

This thesis explored the interplay between Dark Triad personality traits (Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy) and attitudes toward stalking, as well as gender differences in these areas. Building on foundational theories of Relational Goal Pursuit (RGP) and previous research into gender differences in both general and dark personality traits, this study aimed to analyse how these factors interact to shape perceptions and attitudes towards stalking.

According to RGP theory, individuals may persistently pursue a relationship even when it is no longer sustainable or reciprocated, viewing relationships as goal-directed pursuits (Cupach et al., 2011). This theoretical framework helps to explain why individuals with higher levels of Dark Triad traits might exhibit more permissive attitudes towards stalking, as their intense focus on attaining relational goals can justify their persistent behaviours.

Unexpectedly, the study found no significant gender differences in either dark triad traits or attitudes toward stalking. Independent t-tests showed no significant differences in dark triad scores between men and women, nor in their attitudes towards stalking. This contradicts much of the established literature (Muris et al., 2017; McKeon et al., 2015), which typically reports higher dark triad traits and more permissive attitudes toward aggressive behaviours such as stalking among men. These results suggest a potentially more consistent distribution of dark triad traits and their impact on stalking attitudes across genders. This deviation from traditional assumptions may indicate shifting societal norms and evolving gender roles (BRÅ, 2019). The lack of significant gender differences could also imply that both men and women are similarly influenced by dark triad traits when it comes to attitudes towards stalking (Smoker & March, 2017).

The findings challenge prevailing theories and highlight the need for further research to reexamine gender differences in personality traits and attitudes towards stalking (Muris et al., 2017; McKeon et al., 2015). It may be valuable to explore how cultural influences, other personality dimensions, and different stalking contexts impact these behaviours. Future studies should consider larger and more diverse samples to improve the generalizability of the results and develop more comprehensive interventions to address stalking attitudes.

As hypothesised, individuals with stronger dark triad traits exhibited less negative attitudes towards stalking. Spearman's correlation analysis demonstrated a significant positive

relationship between dark triad traits and attitudes towards stalking. This supports the idea that higher levels of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy are associated with more permissive attitudes towards stalking behaviours (Branković et al., 2023). These findings align with previous research suggesting that individuals with these traits are more likely to engage in or endorse socially aversive behaviours (Smoker & March, 2017; Stiff, 2019; Branković et al., 2023). The implications are significant, indicating that interventions aimed at reducing stalking behaviours may need to consider underlying personality traits.

Integrating RGP theory, which posits that individuals view relationships as key goals and persist in their pursuit despite rejection, deepens our understanding of how those with high levels of Dark Triad traits might rationalise their persistent and invasive behaviours in stalking (Cupach et al., 2011). This theoretical perspective underscores the importance of addressing both the motivational aspects of relational goals and the personality traits that drive these behaviours.

Hypothesis 1 and 2: Gender, the Dark Triad and attitudes toward stalking

Hypothesis 1 predicted that men would perceive stalking behaviours as more acceptable compared to women. This hypothesis was not supported, highlighting a general disapproval of stalking behaviours irrespective of gender. This might be attributed to the composition of our study's sample: one third of the respondents consisted of men. This uneven balance of perspective may have affected the results of this study.

In relation to previous research, the results of the current study both align and contradict findings in various studies in this field. For instance, Smoker and March (2017) found in their study that women scored higher than men on intimate partner cyberstalking behaviours. The possibly premature implication that could be drawn from results such as these, due to the fact that their article investigates perpetration and not attitudes, is that gender differences in stalking may be decreasing. One possibility could be due to the rise in technology and therefore the expansion of cyberstalking. However, an article by Branković et al. (2023) garnered evidence that partially aligns with the current study's findings. They found that while men stalked more than women, there were no gender differences in cyberstalking, possibly adding to the argument that gender differences in stalking are altering in today's society. To clarify, the cautious analogy being drawn here suggests that as technological advancements alter the landscape of sex differences in perpetration, corresponding shifts in attitudes may also occur.

Moreover, Hyde (2014) identified notable similarities between the sexes in terms of aggression, which might partially explain the results of the current study. Specifically, Hyde's

meta-analysis suggested that women can exhibit levels of aggression equal to, if not greater than, those of men when they believe they are not being observed. This finding hints that the absence of significant gender differences in attitudes toward stalking in the current study could be related to the context and methods of stalking behaviour. Given the increasing reliance on technology, it is possible that women might prefer cyberstalking as their primary method of stalking. Cyberstalking, which involves using digital tools and platforms to monitor, harass, or intimidate individuals, can be conducted discreetly, potentially aligning with contexts where women might express higher levels of aggression. This technological shift in stalking behaviours may help to explain the observed narrowing of the gender gap in attitudes toward stalking.

Hypothesis 2, proposing that men would score higher on dark triad traits than women, was not supported by our data. This finding contradicts some earlier research suggesting gender differences in these traits (Paulhus & Williams, 2002; Smoker & March, 2017). This is possibly due to variations in sample demographics as mentioned earlier. The lack of male respondents may have led to lacking information regarding men's tendencies in relation to dark traits. Furthermore, one possibility may be that the men that participated in the survey could be part of the normal distribution that scores significantly lower on the Dark Triad. This suggests that our sample might not be representative of the general population, and therefore caution should be taken in regards to the generalizability of the current study.

From a theoretical perspective, this study offers a modest contribution to the ongoing discussion about gender stereotypes (Brewster, 2003) associated with the Dark Triad and aggressive behaviours like stalking. The lack of significant gender differences in our findings suggests that the influence of these personality traits on stalking behaviours might be more similar across genders than previously thought (Lyndon et al., 2012). While these results are preliminary, they prompt a re-evaluation of some earlier research that indicated women might be more likely to engage in stalking behaviours than men (Smoker & March, 2017). This insight, although tentative, may inspire a cautious reconsideration of how dark triad traits are approached and studied in psychological research, potentially advocating for less gender-specific methods in future research designs and theoretical frameworks.

This study explores how dark triad traits relate to attitudes towards stalking, yielding some insights despite not finding clear gender differences. The absence of these differences, while not definitive, invites consideration of the potential uniform influence of these personality traits across genders. This finding might be relevant to fields like psychology and

gender studies, where it could help inform more nuanced prevention and intervention strategies against stalking behaviours.

Currently, prevention and intervention strategies primarily focus on traditional forms of stalking, with gender-specific approaches often emphasising the protection of women, as statistics indicate that women are more frequently subjected to violence and harassment (BRÅ, 2024). However, the study's findings suggest that stalking behaviours and the underlying personality traits might not be as gender-specific as previously thought (Lyndon et al., 2012). Consequently, it might be important to consider more inclusive, gender-neutral strategies that address the root psychological factors associated with dark triad traits. For instance, educational programs and awareness campaigns could be designed to target individuals with high levels of these traits, focusing on empathy training, conflict resolution, and the development of healthy relationship skills. Additionally, integrating screening for dark triad traits into clinical and counselling settings might help identify individuals at risk of engaging in stalking behaviours, allowing for early intervention and personalised treatment plans.

Hypothesis 3: Attitudes toward stalking and the Dark Triad

The results of the current study found a significant positive correlation between the Dark Triad and attitudes toward stalking, which supported our hypothesis that higher scores on the Dark Triad are associated with an increased accepting attitude toward stalking. This is in line with previous research, such as that of Stiff (2019), Branković et al. (2023), and Smoker and March (2017). These results suggest that the socially aversive traits that the Dark Triad consists of could be used as predictive factors when identifying how attitudes are formed about stalking behaviours. Additionally, these results along with that of previous research build a further understanding of the individuals behind the attitudes regarding stalking behaviours (Cupach et al., 2011). Additional research in this area could increase the understanding of the individuals that perpetrate stalking behaviours, that of in-person stalking as well as cyberstalking. Furthermore, of interest for future research is to connect the Dark Triad to the motives behind stalking perpetrators and the behaviours they exhibit.

Additionally, the findings underscore the necessity to integrate dark triad traits more thoroughly into broader personality and behavioural theories. Such integration could enrich models of social behaviour and personality psychology, particularly in elucidating deviant behaviours like stalking. It offers nuanced insights into the pathways through which personality influences behaviour.

Moreover, considering the study's integration of Relational Goal Pursuit theory (Cupach et al., 2011), the results suggest a need to revisit this framework to examine how Dark Triad traits interact with relational goals across various contexts and relationships. The insights gleaned can deepen our understanding by illustrating how individuals with high levels of these traits manage their interpersonal relationships and pursue their relational goals, often in socially unacceptable ways (Baumeister et al., 1993; Dunn, 1999; Cupach et al., 2011). Specifically, it can reveal the mechanisms and strategies these individuals use, the impact on their partners, and the broader social implications of their behaviour (Cupach et al., 2011).

On the practical front, the universal implications of dark triad traits on attitudes toward stalking necessitate a more inclusive approach in policy making and legal frameworks that address stalking (Cupach et al., 2011; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). Recognizing that these personality traits significantly influence attitudes toward stalking, irrespective of gender, can help in crafting gender-neutral policies and interventions that are more effective in preventing and addressing stalking behaviours (Cupach et al., 2011). This research also supports the development of targeted interventions aimed at individuals exhibiting high levels of dark triad traits. Programs focusing on awareness, education, and behavioural modification could be specifically tailored to address the ways in which these traits contribute to stalking behaviours. Possible interventions might encompass conflict resolution guidance, empathy training, and techniques for controlling impulsivity and manipulative behaviours in relationships (Spitzberg & Cupach, 2014).

For practitioners in clinical and counselling psychology, these results might offer a helpful perspective on the potential benefits of considering dark triad traits screening in clients who exhibit stalking behaviours (Spitzberg & Cupach, 2014). Understanding these personality dimensions can possibly enhance therapeutic approaches, helping clinicians develop more personalised and effective treatment plans that address the root psychological factors driving such behaviours (Cupach et al., 2011; Spitzberg & Cupach, 2014).

Limitations

Despite the strengths of a quantitative strategy, there are limitations to consider. The primary limitation lies in the reliance on self-reported data, which can introduce biases such as social desirability or inaccurate self-assessment. Participants may underreport undesirable traits or behaviours or be unaware of their own tendencies, potentially skewing the results. This factor is particularly crucial when dealing with personality traits like those in the Dark Triad, which are socially aversive and might be underreported due to their negative

connotations. Although the survey that was utilised was anonymous and potentially minimised this phenomenon, it may not have excluded it completely, and therefore has to be taken into consideration when interpreting the results. This limitation is apparent in the results, as evidenced by the lower mean score for the Dark Triad construct. This suggests the potential presence of social desirability bias within the study's sample. Alternatively, and perhaps more optimistically, it may indicate that the majority of individuals tend to score relatively low on these dark traits.

Furthermore, concerning the sample demographics, the majority of respondents were women, which may have influenced the study's outcomes. Regarding the Dark Triad, an important limitation arises from the possibility that the male participants in this study scored lower on this personality spectrum, than perhaps the rest of the population, as indicated by previous research, such as Muris et al. (2017). Consequently, caution is warranted in interpreting the findings. Additionally, with regard to attitudes toward stalking, it is pertinent to contextualise this research. The study was conducted in Sweden, where discussions around issues such as intimate partner violence have gained prominence, particularly following movements like #MeToo (BRÅ, 2019). As such, the study results may reflect prevailing societal discourse, wherein stalking and cyberstalking are increasingly scrutinised. This contextualization poses challenges in comparing the study findings with existing literature, as they may not align with similar societal conditions.

Furthermore, investigating additional variables such as age, ethnicity, or educational background could potentially yield more profound insights. However, considering the relatively small sample size of participants in Sweden used in this study, the external validity is limited. Expanding the study to include more participants from diverse backgrounds could help address these limitations. Given the time constraints we faced, including further variables in this specific study was not feasible. Future studies should consider these aspects to enhance the robustness and applicability of the findings.

Additionally, the use of online surveys and convenience sampling, while advantageous for reaching a diverse and broad participant pool, might also limit the generalizability of the findings. The individuals who opt to participate in online surveys may not perfectly represent the wider population, and the voluntary nature of participation might attract individuals with specific interests or characteristics. Another limitation is that we modified certain questions and removed some questions from the scales, which may have introduced a source of error.

Future research could incorporate methods that minimise self-report biases, such as integrating behavioural assessments or utilising third-party reports to corroborate self-reported

data. Employing a more randomised sampling method might also enhance the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, adopting a mixed-methods approach, particularly incorporating interviews, could provide deeper insights into the motivations and contexts influencing dark triad traits and stalking behaviours, which might not be fully captured by quantitative methods alone. It's important to specify that due to the non-experimental nature of this study, we cannot confirm causality between dark triad traits and stalking attitudes. Exploring how to experimentally test these relationships remains a challenge and requires careful consideration in future research designs.

In summary, while the quantitative methodology of this study provided insights into the correlations between dark triad traits and attitudes toward stalking across genders, the noted limitations must be considered when interpreting the results. Addressing these limitations in future research will be crucial for advancing our understanding of these complex psychological phenomena.

Conclusion

This study has explored the relationship between dark triad personality traits and attitudes towards stalking and cyberstalking, revealing a noteworthy correlation. Our findings suggest that individuals exhibiting higher levels of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy may also show more positive attitudes toward stalking behaviours. This link, while significant, is an initial step in understanding how these specific personality traits might influence such attitudes, and further investigation is warranted.

Interestingly, our examination of gender differences in these attitudes did not show significant variations. This suggests that the influence of the Dark Triad on stalking behaviours could be consistent across genders, challenging some established views in the field. This finding is particularly important as it contradicts common stereotypes about gender and stalking, emphasising the need for a more nuanced understanding.

It is crucial to acknowledge the limitations of our study, particularly the small sample size and reliance on self-reporting, which constrain the generalizability of these findings. Future research should incorporate a more diverse and larger sample to enhance external validity and potentially reveal more nuanced interactions between personality traits and stalking behaviours.

Stalking is a growing phenomenon, making it essential and necessary to investigate these links further. By understanding the personality traits that contribute to stalking, we can refine and improve interventions. For example, educational programs and therapeutic

approaches should focus on developing empathy, enhancing conflict resolution skills, and addressing the manipulative and impulsive behaviours associated with the dark triad traits.

In closing, while this study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by highlighting potential connections between the Dark Triad and stalking attitudes, the results should be viewed as preliminary. They underscore the need for continued exploration into this area to refine interventions and develop more effective measures to address and prevent stalking behaviours rooted in these complex personality dimensions. Further work in this field could significantly enhance our understanding and response to the psychological underpinnings of stalking behaviours.

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Tables

Table 3: Descriptive statistics

Descriptives			
	Gender	DT Mean	ATT + CYB Mean
N	Male	55	55
	Female	110	110
Mean	Male	2.22	2.08
	Female	2.16	2.05
Median	Male	2.19	2.05
	Female	2.15	1.97
Standard deviation	Male	0.406	0.368
	Female	0.453	0.383
Minimum	Male	1.48	1.32
	Female	1.07	1.30
Maximum	Male	3.15	2.96
	Female	3.17	2.99
Shapiro-Wilk W	Male	0.978	0.976
	Female	0.985	0.962
Shapiro-Wilk p	Male	0.416	0.333
	Female	0.271	0.003

Descriptive statistics after modifying outliers displaying sample size, means, medians, standard deviations, minimum and maximum points, and normality in the data set. These statistics, specifically normality, laid the foundation for the chosen analyses performed in the data analysis.

Table 4: Reliability analysis for SRAQ

Scale Reliability Statistics	
	Cronbach's α
scale	0.820

The reliability analysis of the SRAQ scale, $\alpha = 0.820$, indicating satisfactory reliability, in line with McKeon et al. (2015) where they acquired satisfactory Cronbach's alphas from their reliability analyses.

Table 5: Reliability analysis for IPCS

Scale Reliability Statistics	
	Cronbach's α
scale	0.768

The reliability analysis of the IPCS scale, $\alpha = 0.768$, suggesting a satisfactory reliability, in line with Smoker and March (2017) where they acquired an excellent Cronbach's alpha of 0.92.

Table 6: Reliability analysis for overall stalking attitudes

Scale Reliability Statistics	
	Cronbach's α
scale	0.858

The reliability analysis of the overall attitudes toward stalking, where the SRAQ and IPCS scales are merged, $\alpha = 0.858$, suggesting satisfactory reliability.

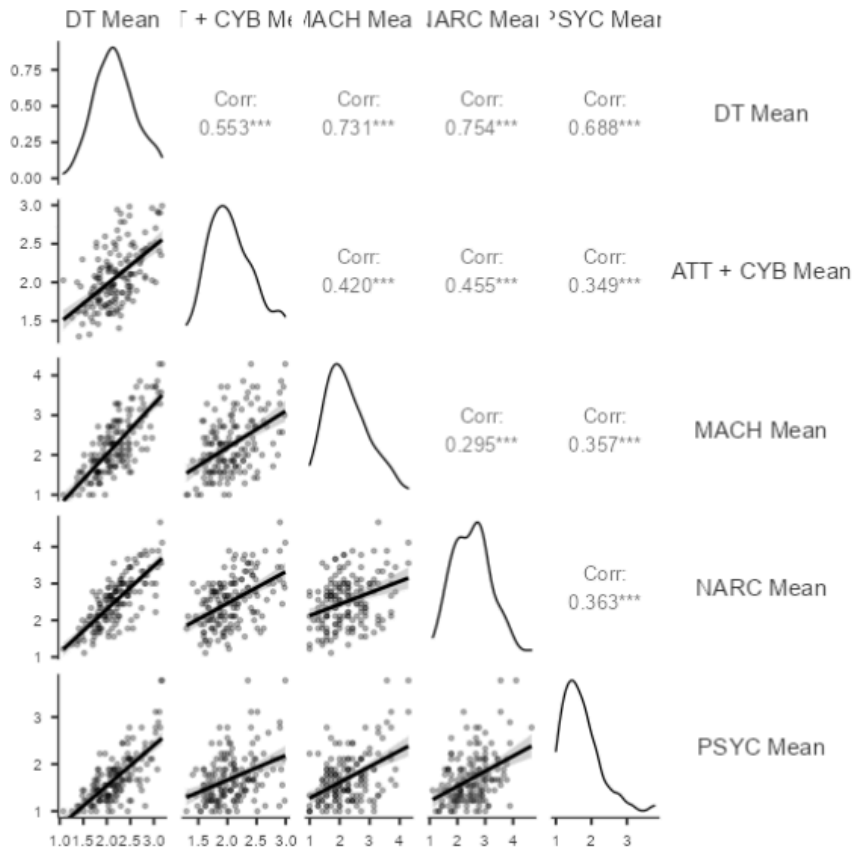
Table 7: Reliability analysis for SD3

Scale Reliability Statistics	
	Cronbach's α
scale	0.824

The reliability analysis of the Short Dark Triad scale, $\alpha = 0.824$, indicating satisfactory reliability in line with previous research on the scales reliability (Jones & Paulhus, 2014).

Figures

Figure 1, Scatter plots and density plots of the study's constructs, utilising Spearman's rho



This matrix of scatter plots and density plots illustrates the relationships between various psychological constructs. The constructs include DT Mean (Dark Triad Mean, SD3 scale), ATT + CYB Mean (Attitudes towards Stalking, SRAQ scale, and Cyberstalking Mean, IPCS scale), MACH Mean (Machiavellianism Mean), NARC Mean (Narcissism Mean), and PSYC Mean (Psychopathy Mean). Each plot shows positive correlations between these constructs, with all correlations being statistically significant (denoted by ***). The density plots indicate the distribution of scores for each construct, while the scatter plots depict the positive linear relationships between pairs of constructs. This suggests that higher scores in one trait are associated with higher scores in others.

Appendix

Appendix 1: Stalking-Related Attitude Questionnaire (SRAQ)

Retrieved from and crafted by McKeon et. al. in 2015, translated through back-translation by the authors of this thesis. 30 items were chosen from originally 34 items, certain words were rephrased. 30 items, 1-5 rating scale.

1. A woman who dates a lot would be more likely to be stalked.
En person som dejtar mycket skulle löpa större risk att bli utsatt för stalkning.
2. Saying no to a stalker will just provoke him.
Att säga nej till en stalkare kommer endast att provocera dem.
3. Certain types of women are more likely to be stalked.
Vissa typer av personer är mer benägna att bli utsatta för stalkning.
4. A woman may be more likely to be stalked if she cannot clearly say no
En person som har svårt att säga nej tydligt kan löpa högre risk att utsättas för stalkning
5. A man should be allowed to pursue a woman to a certain extent, if it is part of romance.
Att "förfölja" någon till en viss grad kan vara OK, om det är en del av romantiken.
6. What one person may see as stalking, another may see as romantic.
Det som en person ser som stalkning kan en annan se som "romantiskt".
7. If a woman gives any encouragement, the man has a right to continue his pursuit.
Om man uppmuntrar sin beundrare på något sätt, så har denne rätt att fortsätta sin "uppvaktning"
8. Women find it flattering to be persistently pursued.
Vissa finner det smickrande att bli ihärdigt uppvaktade.
9. If a woman says no, even once, a man should leave her alone.
Om en person säger nej, även en gång, bör de lämnas ifred.
10. It's normal for a woman to say no to a date at first because she doesn't want to seem too eager.
Det är normalt att först säga nej till en dejt, för att inte verka för angelägen
11. If a man and woman have been in a romantic relationship, the man has more right to pursue her than if they have never met.
Man har mer rätt att fortsätta att uppvakta ett ex, jämfört med någon man aldrig träffat förr

12. Some women actually want to be stalked; they see it as a compliment.
Vissa personer vill faktiskt bli stalkade; de ser det som en komplimang.
13. If there is no actual violence, it shouldn't be a crime.
En handling som inte är våldsam, bör inte ses som ett brott.
14. Repeatedly following someone, making phone calls and leaving gifts doesn't actually hurt anyone.
Att upprepade gånger förfölja någon, kontakta dem på olika sätt och lämna presenter skadar faktiskt inte någon.
15. Stalkers are a nuisance but they are not criminals.
Stalkare är störiga, men de är inte kriminella
16. Stranger stalking is the only real stalking.
Bara stalkning av främlingar är äkta stalkning
17. Stalking is just an extreme form of courtship.
Stalkning är bara en extrem form av uppvaktning.
18. It's not really stalking if you know the person and they know you.
Det är inte riktig stalkning om du känner personen och de känner dig.
19. Any person could be stalked.
Vem som helst kan bli stalkad.
20. Stalking is a type of violence.
Stalkning är en form av våld.
21. If someone continues to say nice things and give nice gifts, then stalking is far more acceptable.
Om någon fortsätter att säga snälla saker och ge fina presenter, då är stalkning mycket mer acceptabelt.
22. A certain amount of repeated phoning and following is okay, even if a woman has said no.
En viss mängd upprepad kontakt och stalkning är okej, även om en person har sagt nej.
23. "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again", ideas like this make stalking acceptable.
"Om du inte lyckas första gången, fortsätt försöka," idéer som detta gör stalkning acceptabelt.
24. If a woman just ignored the man, he would eventually go away.
Om man bara ignorerar stalkaren, så kommer den till slut ge upp

25. If you were really in love with somebody, you wouldn't take no for an answer.
Om du verkligen var kär i någon, så skulle du inte acceptera ett "nej."
26. Stalkers only continue because they get some sort of encouragement.
Stalkare fortsätter endast för att de får någon form av uppmuntran.
27. It's not stalking if you are trying to get your wife back.
Det är inte stalkning om du försöker vinna tillbaka din partner.
28. Staying in contact with someone shouldn't really be seen as a crime, if you are actually in love.
Att hålla kontakten med någon bör inte ses som ett brott, om du faktiskt är kär.
29. Even if they were annoyed, most women would be at least a little flattered by stalking.
Även om de var irriterade, så skulle de flesta känna sig lite smickrade av att bli stalkade
30. Those who are upset by stalking are likely more sensitive than others.
De som är upprörda över stalkning är förmodligen känsligare än andra.

Appendix 2: Intimate Partner Cyber Stalking Scale (IPCS-scale)

Retrieved from and crafted by Smoker & March in 2017, translated through back-translation by the authors of this thesis. Seven items were chosen from originally 21 items, and certain words were rephrased. Seven items, 1-5 rating scale.

1. If my partner is going out, I will usually check their online accounts to see what they're up to
Om min partner går ut, så brukar jag kontrollera deras sociala medier för att se vad de gör.
2. I would help, or have helped friends access their partner/ex-partner's online accounts.
Jag skulle hjälpa, eller har hjälpt, vänner att få tillgång till deras partners eller ex-partners sociala medier.
3. I have checked my partner's messages (e.g. e-mail, Facebook, phone) without them knowing
Jag har kontrollerat min partners meddelanden (t.ex. E-post, Facebook, telefon) utan att de vet om det.
4. If I suspected my partner was lying I would check their online accounts to help verify my suspicions.
Om jag misstänkte att min partner ljög, så skulle jag kontrollera deras sociala medier för att bekräfta mina misstankar.

5. I have used an alternative (“fake”) online account (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, e-mail) to check other's profiles without them knowing.
Jag har använt ett falskt onlinekonto (t.ex. Facebook, Instagram, e-post) för att kontrollera andras profiler utan att de vet om det.
6. I have posed as someone else over social media/email/phone in order to contact someone who wouldn't otherwise respond.
Jag har utgett mig för att vara någon annan på sociala medier/e-post/telefon för att kontakta någon som annars inte skulle svara.
7. If my partner betrayed me, I wouldn't hesitate using social media to shame them.
Om min partner svek mig, så skulle jag inte tveka att använda sociala medier för att skämma ut dem.
8. I have used or considered using phone apps to track my partner's activities.
Jag har använt eller övervägt att använda telefonappar för att spåra min partners aktiviteter.

Appendix 3: Short Dark Triad (SD3)

The statements in the questionnaire were designed in 2013 by Daniel N. Jones (University of Texas at El Paso) and Delroy L. Paulhus (University of British Columbia). The Swedish version, including back-translation, was created by Magnus Lindén and R. Larsson (Lund University), Anna M. Dåderman (University West), and George Farrants (Billericay AB). 27 items, 1-5 rating scale.

Machiavellianism:

1. It's not wise to tell your secrets.
Det är inte så begåvat att berätta sina hemligheter för någon.
2. I like to use clever manipulation to get my way.
Jag gillar att använda smarta sätt att manipulera andra för att få som jag vill.
3. Whatever it takes, you must get the important people on your side.
Man måste få de viktiga människorna på sin sida, oavsett vad det kostar.
4. Avoid direct conflict with others because they may be useful in the future.
Undvik direkta konflikter med andra personer, eftersom de kan vara användbara i framtiden.
5. It's wise to keep track of information that you can use against people later.
Det är smart att hålla koll på saker som man senare kan använda mot andra människor.

6. You should wait for the right time to get back at people.
Man bör vänta på rätt tillfälle att ge igen på någon.
7. There are things you should hide from other people to preserve your reputation.
Det finns saker man bör dölja för andra, eftersom de inte behöver veta.
8. Make sure your plans benefit yourself, not others.
Försäkra dig om att dina planer ger fördelar till just dig och inte någon annan.
9. Most people can be manipulated.
De flesta människor kan bli manipulerade.

Narcissism:

1. People see me as a natural leader.
Andra ser mig som en naturlig ledare.
2. I hate being the center of attention. (R)
Jag avskyr att vara den som är i uppmärksamhetens mittpunkt.
3. Many group activities tend to be dull without me.
Många gruppaktiviteter tenderar att bli tråkiga utan mig.
4. I know that I am special because everyone keeps telling me so.
Jag vet att jag är speciell, eftersom alla hela tiden talar om det för mig.
5. I like to get acquainted with important people.
Jag gillar att lära känna viktiga personer.
6. I feel embarrassed if someone compliments me. (R)
Jag känner mig bortgjord när någon ger mig en komplimang.
7. I have been compared to famous people.
Jag har blivit jämförd med kända människor.
8. I am an average person. (R)
Jag är en ordinär person.
9. I insist on getting the respect I deserve.
Jag insisterar på att få den respekt jag förtjänar.

Psychopathy:

1. I like to get revenge on authorities.
Jag gillar att hämnas på auktoriteter.
2. I avoid dangerous situations. (R)
Jag undviker farliga situationer.
3. Payback needs to be quick and nasty.
En hämnd måste ske fort och utföras på ett fult sätt.

4. People often say I'm out of control.
Andra talar ofta om för mig att jag har tappat kontrollen.
5. It's true that I can be mean to others.
Det stämmer att jag kan vara elak mot andra.
6. People who mess with me always regret it.
Människor som bråkar med mig får alltid ångra det.
7. I have never gotten into trouble with the law. (R)
Jag har aldrig kommit i klammeri med rättsväsendet.
8. I enjoy having sex with people I hardly know
Jag njuter av att ha sex med personer jag knappt känner.
9. I'll say anything to get what I want.
Jag säger vad som helst för att få som jag vill.