Factors Predicting Courtship Stalking Behaviors in Female College Students

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Abstract. This study aimed to investigate the factors predicting courtship stalking behaviors in female college students. The data were collected from 150 female college students concerning “women wanting to date someone who did not want to meet them” at a four-year university located in D city from November 2nd to 29th, 2014, and from September 1st to 25th, 2015. Binominal logistic regression analysis was performed to determine factors predicting participants’ courtship stalking behavior. The present study found that attachment anxiety was the predictive factors for courtship stalking behavior in female college students. That is, when attachment anxiety was higher, there was a risk of increasing stalking behavior. Therefore, it is necessary to form positive attachment relationships, and a nursing intervention is required that considers the predictive factors of stalking behaviors.

Keywords: Domestic violence experience, Adult attachment, Courtship stalking behaviors

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Recently, damage caused by stalking has been increasing on a regular basis in South Korean society, and the social interest in stalking is also increasing. According to the Korean Women link, the number of counseling cases related to stalking was 85 in 2014, an increase of 20 cases over the previous year [1]. Stalking is a behavior that repeatedly and in various ways instills fear and anxiety in the person being stalked with the intention of fulfilling the stalker’s desire to possess the other person regardless of the other person’s intention [2].

Depending on the purpose of the action, stalking is classified as courtship stalking, bully stalking, or slander stalking. Among these, courtship stalking refers to one sided courtship stalking behavior stemming from favorable or romantic emotions toward the other person [3]. The occurrence of courtship stalking behavior is increasing among college students once they are freed from the stress of college entrance exams.
and develop an interest in those of the opposite gender. In particular, it has been reported that the number of female students who stalk someone of the opposite gender to win his love has been increasing, and female students are involved in more serious stalking behaviors [4]. However, no issue has been raised regarding the courtship-stalking behavior of female students.

Accordingly, the current study intended to discover factors predicting stalking behavior in female college students. The results of the current study will be valuable as baseline data for developing a nursing intervention to prevent and manage risk factors for courtship stalking behavior in female college students in the future.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this study was to identify the factors predicting courtship stalking behavior in female college students.

2 Methods

2.1 Study Design

The current investigation is a descriptive survey study to determine the factors predicting courtship stalking behavior in female college students.

2.2 Participants and Data Collection

To conduct the study, the researchers obtained consent to cooperate from the head of the target organization and visited the organization from November 2 to 29, 2014, and from September 1 to 25, 2015. The participants were 150 female college students concerning “women wanting to date someone who did not want to meet them” at a four-year university located in D city. The samples were analyzed using G*power 3.1.9 with the effect size of 0.15, power of test of 0.95, significance level of 0.05, and five predictor variables. While 211 questionnaires were retrieved (return rate: 92%), 61 insincere questionnaires were excluded, and the final 150 questionnaires were used in the analysis.

2.3 Instruments

Domestic Violence Experience. The Parent–Child Conflict Tactics Scales developed by Straus [5] and translated by Choi [6] were used as a measuring instrument for childhood abuse experience. The instrument is composed of two subareas of emotional and physical violence, and each subarea is made up of five and nine
questions, respectively, for a total of 14 questions. Each question is scored on the five-point Likert scale from “none” (one point) to “almost every day” (five points), and a higher score means higher abuse experience in childhood. The reliability of the instrument at the time of development measured with Cronbach’s α was .77 for emotional abuse, .78 for physical abuse, and .80 in the present study.

**Adult Attachment.** The revised version of Experience in Close Relationship-Revised by Brennan [7] and translated by Hwang [8] was used. The instrument is composed of 36 questions: 18 on attachment anxiety measuring fear of rejection, abandonment, and commitment and 18 on attachment avoidance measuring fear or discomfort regarding becoming intimate with or close to others. Each question is scored on a five-point Likert scale from “strongly disagree” (one point) to “strongly agree” (five points). Eight questions were reverse questions, and they were coded in reverse. A higher total score in each area of attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance means that the corresponding area is formed unstably. In the study by Hwang [8], the Cronbach’s α was .86 for attachment anxiety and .60 for attachment avoidance; the Cronbach’s α in the present study was .85 for adult attachment, .82 for attachment anxiety, and .64 for attachment avoidance.

**Courtship-Stalking Behaviors.** The courtship stalking behaviors presented by Sinclair and Frieze [9] were used. At the time of instrument development, this comprised a total of 52 questions in six subareas of approach, surveillance, intimidation, harming oneself, verbal abuse/mild physical harm, and extreme physical harm. The present study used only 18 questions in three items—approach (five questions), surveillance (eight questions), and intimidation (five questions)—which were classified as less abusive than the other three and reported to have higher prevalence in female college students. Each question was given one point for none and five points for more than 10 times and was evaluated on a five-point Likert scale. The reliability of the instrument measured with Cronbach’s α at the time of development was .78, and the Cronbach’s α in the present study was .81.

### 2.4 Data Analyses

The collected data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 20.0. The general characteristics of the participants were calculated in frequencies and percentages, and averages and standard deviations were obtained for the experiences of domestic violence and adult attachment. Courtship-stalking behaviors of the participants were analyzed in percentages. To determine the degree of participants’ experiences of domestic violence, adult attachment, and courtship stalking, averages and standard deviations were used, and the differences in courtship-stalking behaviors by the general characteristics were checked using non-parametric tests (Mann-Whitney U test or Kruskal-Wallis test). To determine the relationship among the experience of domestic violence, adult attachment, and courtship-stalking behavior, Spearman’s rho was used. Lastly, binomial logistic regression analysis was performed to determine the factors predicting participants’ courtship-stalking behaviors.
3 Results

Binomial logistic regression analysis results showed a significant difference only in attachment anxiety of adult attachments. It was found that, as the attachment anxiety of female college student increased, so did the courtship-stalking behavior ($\text{Exp}(B) = 1.101$, $p = .008$) [Table 1].

Table 1. Predicting factors of courtship-stalking behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Adjusted OR</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
<th>$p$</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>General characteristics</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Drinking frequency</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(Reference: Five times or more per month)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never drinks</td>
<td>.860</td>
<td>.100</td>
<td>7.425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than once per month</td>
<td>.983</td>
<td>.214</td>
<td>4.517</td>
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<tr>
<td>2–4 times per month</td>
<td>1.971</td>
<td>.473</td>
<td>8.217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domestic violence experience</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Childhood abuse</td>
<td>.992</td>
<td>.917</td>
<td>1.083</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inter-parental violence exposure</td>
<td>.737</td>
<td>.917</td>
<td>1.073</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Adult attachment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachment anxiety</td>
<td>1.101</td>
<td>1.026</td>
<td>1.182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachment avoidance</td>
<td>.955</td>
<td>.871</td>
<td>1.046</td>
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<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>.021</td>
<td></td>
<td>.060</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
4 Conclusions

The present study found that the attachment anxiety is a predictive factor for courtship-stalking behavior in female college students—that is, the higher the attachment anxiety, the higher the risk of increased stalking behavior. Therefore, it is necessary to form positive attachment relationships at home and to develop and implement related government policies. In addition, a nursing intervention that considers the predictive factors of stalking behavior is needed.

References