

# Perceived Partner Responsiveness and Intimate Partner Cyberstalking: The Mediating Role of Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction and Frustration

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## Keywords

Cyberstalking, romantic relationships, basic psychological need satisfaction and frustration, perceived partner responsiveness

## Anahtar kelimeler

Siber takip, romantik ilişkiler, temel psikolojik ihtiyaç tatmini ve engellenmesi, algılanan partner duyarlılığı

## Abstract

Cyberstalking in romantic relationships can have psychological consequences for victims, suggesting that there is a need to understand the factors behind such behaviors. Hence, the present study explored the relationship between perceived partner responsiveness and cyberstalking. It also investigated the mediating role of basic psychological need satisfaction and frustration in this relationship. The final sample consisted of 212 Turkish individuals ( $M_{age} = 27.31$ ,  $SD = 8.14$ , Min-Max = 18-58 years) who were in a romantic relationship for over one month. They completed an online questionnaire package to measure perceived partner responsiveness, cyberstalking in intimate romantic relationships, and basic psychological need satisfaction and frustration. The results of current study showed that perceived partner responsiveness and basic psychological need frustration were significantly correlated with cyberstalking in intimate romantic relationships. In addition, perceived partner responsiveness was indirectly related to cyberstalking through need frustration. In conclusion, these findings provide insight into the negative relationship between perceived partner responsiveness and cyberstalking and the mediating role of basic need frustration on this relationship.

## Algılanan Partner Duyarlılığı ve Partnere Yönelik Siber Takip: Temel Psikolojik İhtiyaç Tatmini ve Engellenmesinin Aracı Rolü

### Öz

Romantik ilişkilerde siber takibin mağdurlar üzerinde psikolojik sonuçları olabileceğinden bu tür davranışların arkasındaki faktörlerin araştırılmasına ihtiyaç olduğu düşünülmektedir. Bu nedenle, bu çalışmada algılanan partner duyarlılığı ile siber takip arasındaki ilişki araştırılmıştır. Ayrıca, temel psikolojik ihtiyaç tatmini ve engellenmesinin bu ilişkideki aracı rolü de araştırılmıştır. Çalışmanın örneklemini, bir aydan uzun süredir romantik bir ilişki içinde olan 212 bireyden ( $Ort.yaş = 27,31$ ,  $S = 8,14$ , Min-Mak. = 18-58 yaş) oluşmaktadır. Katılımcılar; algılanan partner duyarlılığını, romantik ilişkilerde siber takibi ve temel psikolojik ihtiyaç tatmini ve engellenmesini ölçen bir çevrimiçi anket paketini tamamlamıştır. Mevcut çalışmanın bulguları algılanan partner duyarlılığının ve temel psikolojik ihtiyaç engellenmesinin romantik ilişkilerde siber takiple istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir korelasyona sahip olduğunu göstermiştir. Ek olarak, algılanan partner duyarlılığı ihtiyaç engellenmesi yoluyla dolaylı olarak siber takiple ilişkili bulunmuştur. Sonuç olarak, bu bulgular, algılanan partner duyarlılığı ile siber takip arasındaki olumsuz ilişki ve bu ilişkide temel ihtiyaç engellenmesinin aracı rolü hakkında fikir vermektedir.

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Cyberstalking occurs in general when one person follows another using electronic communication tools (United States Department of Justice, 1999; Reyns et al., 2012; Wilson et al., 2021). Similarly, based on previous literature, Kaur et al. (2021, p. 9) argued that cyberstalking includes “the use of technology-enabled devices (computers, smartphones, etc.) and platforms (e.g., email, messaging, social media) to continually gather information on the targeted individual”. It is important to note here that there are ambiguities in cyberstalking definitions (Wilson et al., 2021). As for who demonstrates cyberstalking behaviors, they can be either familiar, such as a former romantic partner, or unknown to the victim (Finn, & Banach, 2000; Spitzberg & Cupach, 2007). A few studies have focused on cyberstalking in intimate relationships (e.g., Kircaburun et al., 2018; Smoker & March, 2017; Reiss et al., 2021; Rodríguez-Castro et al., 2021) and reported various psychological consequences for victims (e.g., Reiss et al., 2021; Worsley et al., 2017). Specifically, Reiss et al. (2021) showed that the greater the severity of intimate partner cyberstalking behaviors that individuals experience in current or former relationships, the greater the depressive behaviors and social isolation experienced by the victims. This suggests that it is important to investigate cyberstalking in intimate relationships. The literature also suggests that cyberstalking or partner monitoring on social media is common in intimate romantic relationships (Cantu & Charak, 2022; Darvell et al., 2011; Watkins et al., 2022). Hence, this study aims to investigate how perceived partner responsiveness affects cyberstalking behaviors in terms of basic need satisfaction and frustration.

According to previous studies (Smoker & March 2017, p. 391; see also March et al., 2020; March et al., 2022), cyberstalking or online monitoring behaviors can be directed towards “current, former, or potential intimate partners”. Several studies suggest that relationship features may affect cyberstalking behaviors. Regarding gender differences, women are more likely than men to show cyberstalking behaviors toward their romantic partner (Burke et al., 2011; March et al., 2020). In addition, the duration of the relationship moderates gender differences in cyberstalking behaviors in intimate relationships, with women being more likely than men to show cyberstalking behaviors in long-term relationships (March et al., 2021). In the present study, we focused on the effect of perceived partner responsiveness on cyberstalking behaviors towards the current partner.

Perceived partner responsiveness is characterized by a partner’s awareness of the other’s needs and wishes, together with the presence of a supportive attitude toward them (Reis, 2007). In other words, it reflects “a process by which individuals come to believe that relationship partners both attend to and react supportively to central, core defining features of the self” (Reis et al., 2004, p. 203). Perceived partner responsiveness is one of main factors for fostering and maintaining intimacy (Reis, 2012, 2017). Many studies have shown the beneficial effects in romantic relationships of high perceived partner responsiveness. For example, perceived partner responsiveness is positively related to psychological well-being (Taşfiliz et al., 2018, 2020). Other recent studies have demonstrated positive health-related outcomes of perceived partner responsiveness (O’Neill et al., 2020; Selçuk et al., 2017; Slatcher et al., 2015). Conversely, Ruan et al. (2020) showed that when a person’s perceived partner responsiveness is low, there is less emotional sharing with the partner. Gadassi et al. (2016) showed that perceived partner responsiveness predicts marital satisfaction and Norton et al. (2018) demonstrated that low partner responsiveness in romantic couples is associated with the partners’ thinking that the other partner is monitoring their online activities. The literature on attachment also supported the link between anxiety and partner monitoring on Facebook (Fox & Warber, 2014; Marshall et al., 2013). We therefore hypothesized that there would be a negative significant relationship between perceived partner responsiveness and cyberstalking.

One possible mediator between perceived partner responsiveness and cyberstalking behavior is basic psychological needs, derived from a mini theory (i.e., “Basic Psychological Needs Theory”) of Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2017). According to this theory, there are three basic psychological needs that must be met for psychological functioning and wellbeing (Ryan & Deci, 2002, 2017): competence (“need to feel effectance and mastery”, [Ryan & Deci, 2017, p. 11]), relatedness (“the need to feel belongingness [*belongingness*] and connectedness with others” [Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 73]), and autonomy (“the need to self-regulate one’s experiences and actions” [Ryan & Deci, 2017, p. 10]). Previous research has demonstrated the association between basic need satisfaction and individual well-being (e.g., Akbag & Ümmet, 2017; Church et al., 2013; González-Cutre et al., 2019; Li et al., 2020; Patrick et al., 2007). Meeting psychological needs also improves the quality of romantic relationships (Bucher et al., 2019; Eşici & Özbay, 2020; Patrick et al., 2007). The literature has distinguished between need satisfaction and need frustration in terms of their differential effects on psychological outcomes. Whereas need frustration entails low level of need satisfaction, low level of need satisfaction does not always entail need frustration (Chen et al., 2015; Vansteenkiste & Ryan, 2013; Warburton et al., 2020). Recent studies have investigated the negative effects of basic need frustration in various illbeing situations (e.g., Bartholomew et al., 2011; Bartholomew et al., 2011; Rodríguez-Meirinhos et al., 2020; Selvi & Bozo, 2020; Tindall & Curtis, 2019).

Our literature review suggests that there is no direct empirical evidence regarding the roles of need satisfaction and need frustration in the relationship between perceived partner responsiveness and cyberstalking. However, there is corroborative evidence for the association between basic psychological needs and perceived partner responsiveness. In the self-determination perspective, responsiveness is operationalized in terms of how much the partner satisfies the three basic psychological needs listed above (Knee et al., 2013). Similarly, La Guardia and Patrick (2008) argue that sensitive partners, who they also define as responsive, have a supportive attitude regarding the three basic needs. Consistent with this, La Guardia et al. (2000) reported an association between need satisfaction and attachment security. Similarly, Ibarra-Rovillard and Kuiper (2011) argued that partners can satisfy basic psychological needs through various behaviors that are not specific to these needs. Partners can enhance both well-being and relationship quality by satisfying basic psychological needs (e.g., Patrick et al., 2007; Ratelle et al., 2013).

Ryan and Deci (2017) argue that certain features of close relationships may undermine basic psychological needs. In particular, there are different forms of need frustration (relatedness, autonomy, and competence frustrations) in close relationships (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Consistent with this, Costa et al. (2015) highlighted the differential role of need satisfaction and need frustration on close relationships by showing that only need frustration predicted relationship sensitivity. Related to this, Uysal et al. (2012) found that self-concealment from a romantic partner (specifically, concealing unfavorable information) is related to low basic need satisfaction, which in turn is also related to relationship satisfaction and commitment. That is, low basic need satisfaction mediates the association between self-concealment from partner and relational well-being variables (i.e., relationship satisfaction and commitment). This implies that perceived partner responsiveness can affect need satisfaction and need frustration.

While no studies have directly demonstrated an association between cyberstalking and basic psychological needs, King-Ries (2010) argued that cyberstalking involves disrespect for the partner’s autonomy. Furthermore, there is evidence of its effects from related areas, such as obsessive thinking, cyberbullying, and negative relationships. Fousiani et al. (2016), for example, found an indirect association between autonomy satisfaction and cyberbullying as a form of aggression while Van der Kaap-Deeder et al. (2021) found an association between basic need frustration and negative relationships in the context of

borderline. Lalande et al. (2017) found that low need satisfaction coming from outside of passionate activity is related to obsessive passion (“uncontrollable urge to engage in the passionate activity that one loves” p. 164) for this activity despite a positive association between need satisfaction from the activity itself and this variable. This suggests that low basic need satisfaction and need frustration can be important determinants for cyberstalking, given its resemblance to obsessive passion. Finally, by meta-analyzing three experiments, Valshtein et al. (2019) showed that threatening the need for relatedness toward the romantic partner increased participants’ obsessive thoughts about the partner. This implies a possible relationship between basic psychological needs and cyberstalking. Hence, we hypothesized that overall psychological need satisfaction and frustration would mediate the relationship between perceived partner responsiveness and cyberstalking.

## Method

### Participants

A final sample of 212 participants was determined after excluding participants who filled out the questionnaires incompletely ( $N = 150$ ), answered the control question incorrectly ( $N = 25$ ), were not in a romantic relationship for at least one month ( $N = 3$ ), and had a partner without social media account ( $N = 5$ ), and univariate or multivariate outliers ( $N = 9$ ). Of the 212 participants, 70.3% were female ( $N = 149$ ), 29.2% were male ( $N = 62$ ), and .5% were unknown ( $N = 1$ ); their ages varied between 18-58 years ( $M = 27.31$ ;  $SD = 8.14$ ); 72.6% were in a relationship ( $N = 154$ ), 24.1% were married ( $N = 51$ ), and 3.3% were engaged ( $N = 7$ ); 73.6% had a university degree ( $N = 156$ ), 20.8% had a master’s degree ( $N = 44$ ), 3.8% had a high school diploma ( $N = 8$ ), 1.4% had a PhD degree ( $N = 3$ ), and 0.5% had a primary school diploma ( $N = 1$ ); 92% had an Instagram account ( $N = 195$ ), 72.2% had a Facebook account ( $N = 153$ ), 67.5% had a Twitter account ( $N = 143$ ), 51.9% had a LinkedIn account ( $N = 110$ ), and 8.5% had an account for other social media platforms ( $N = 18$ ).

### Measurements

**Demographic Information Form:** This form includes demographic questions such as age, education, and social media use.

**Perceived Partner Responsiveness Scale:** This 18-item scale, originally developed by Reis (2003, as cited in Taşfiliz et al., 2020) and adapted into Turkish by Taşfiliz et al. (2020), was rated on a 9-point Likert-type scale (“1 = Not at all true”, “9 = Completely True”). An example item is “My partner usually values my abilities and opinions” (Reis et al., 2017). The Cronbach alpha coefficient in the current study was .93 (.95 with outliers).

**Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction and Frustration Scale:** This 24-item scale, originally developed by Chen et al. (2015) and adapted into Turkish by Selvi and Bozo (2020), was rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale (“1 = Not True at all”, “5 = Completely True”). An example item is “I feel a sense of choice and freedom in the things I undertake” (Chen et al., 2015). The scale includes six subscales: autonomy satisfaction, autonomy frustration, relatedness satisfaction, relatedness frustration, competence satisfaction, competence frustration (Chen et al., 2015; Selvi & Bozo 2020). Since the composite scores of three psychological needs can be used to measure need satisfaction and need frustration (Selvi & Bozo 2020), we proceeded with the composite scores. It is worthwhile highlighting here that we used general measures of need frustration and need satisfaction instead of measures that are specific to romantic relationships. The

Cronbach alpha coefficient in the current study was .84 (.86 with outliers) for need frustration and .86 (.86 with outliers) for need satisfaction.

***Intimate Partner Cyberstalking Scale:*** This 21-item scale, originally developed by Smoker and March (2017), was adapted into Turkish in terms of existing romantic relationships. Therefore, two items were omitted, and some items were reworded to be compatible with this context. The scale was rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale (“1 = *Not True at all*”, “5 = *Completely True*”). An example item is “I try to monitor my partner's behaviours through social media.” (Smoker & March, 2017). Consistent with study by Smoker and March (2017), cyberstalking is viewed as a unidimensional. Although a very recent study by March et al. (2022) described three different types of intimate partner cyberstalking, our aim was to focus on cyberstalking as a unidimensional just as Smoker and March (2017) did. The Cronbach alpha coefficient in the present study was .91 (.93 with outliers).

## Procedure

Ethical approval was obtained from İzmir Bakırçay University Non-Invasive Clinical Research Ethics Committee. The participants asked to confirm the informed consent form by using the online survey site before completing the online questionnaire battery. Before the main analyses, the data were screened for univariate and multivariate outliers following the procedure of Tabachnick and Fidell (2014). Specifically, univariate outliers were identified from z scores of  $\pm 3.29$  while the Mahalanobis distance was used to identify multivariate outliers (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2014). There were four univariate outliers for cyberstalking and two for perceived partner responsiveness, and three cases of multivariate outliers. It is worthwhile highlighting here that since three cases were both univariate and multivariate outliers, only remaining three cases are reported as additional multivariate outliers. After deleting all outliers, the skewness (1.87 [2.01 with outliers]) and kurtosis (3.47 [3.95 with outliers]) statistics revealed that cyberstalking was not normally distributed. Hence, bootstrapped and non-parametric analyses were conducted because such an approach “does not impose the assumption of normality of the sampling distribution” (Preacher & Hayes, 2008, p. 880). Bakker and Wicherts (2014) suggested that since analyses without outliers increases Type I error, non-parametric tests with outliers is more appropriate when outliers are present. Winter et al. (2016) showed that, Spearman correlation coefficients are more appropriate than Pearson correlations with high kurtosis value or outliers. Hence, in this study, Spearman correlation coefficients were used. In line with the suggestion by Bakker and Wicherts (2014), we report the analysis both with and without outliers.

## Results

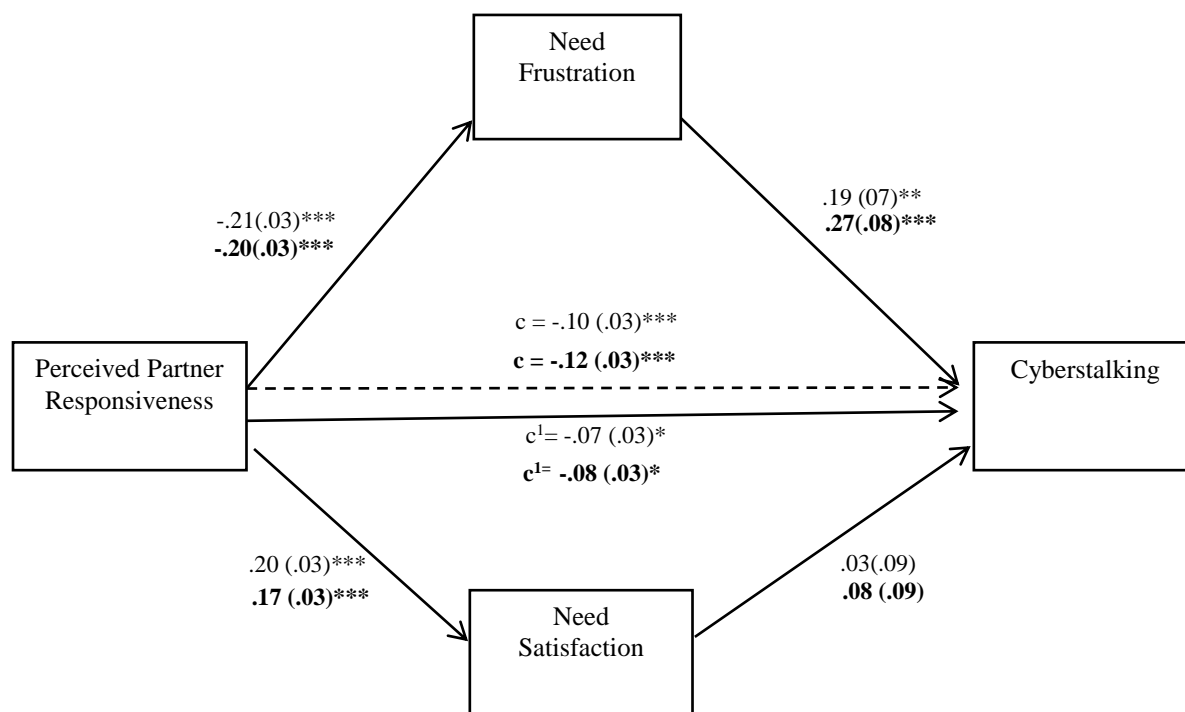
Table 1 presents the Spearman correlation coefficients, means, standard deviation scores and Cronbach Alpha internal consistency values of the study variables. As expected, perceived partner responsiveness was negatively related to cyberstalking. In addition, while there was a positive relationship between perceived partner responsiveness and basic need satisfaction, there was a negative correlation between perceived partner responsiveness and basic need frustration. In contrast, cyberstalking was positively related to basic need frustration. Although cyberstalking was not significantly correlated with basic need satisfaction, this correlation showed a trend that approached significance ( $p = .057$ ) in the analysis without outliers.

A parallel mediation analysis was conducted using PROCESS (MODEL 4) developed by Hayes (2018) to test the mediating roles of basic psychological need satisfaction and need frustration on the relationship between perceived partner responsiveness and cyberstalking. The indirect effect was tested using a 95% confidence interval for 5000 bootstrapped samples. A confidence interval that did not contain zero was considered statistically significant. The results showed that perceived partner responsiveness was significantly associated with both basic need frustration ( $B = -.21$ ,  $SE = .03$ , %95 CI  $[-.28, -.14]$ ,  $p = .00$ ) and need satisfaction ( $B = .20$ ,  $SE = .03$ , %95 CI  $[.14, .25]$ ,  $p = .00$ ). Need frustration ( $B = .19$ ,  $SE = .07$ , %95 CI  $[.05, .34]$ ,  $p = .0096$ ) was significantly associated with cyberstalking whereas need satisfaction was not ( $B = .03$ ,  $SE = .09$ , %95 CI  $[-.13, .20]$ ,  $p = .6839$ ). The total effect of perceived partner responsiveness on cyberstalking was significant ( $B = -.10$ ,  $SE = .03$ , %95 CI  $[-.16, -.05]$ ,  $p = .0003$ ), and the direct effect of perceived partner responsiveness on cyberstalking was significant ( $B = -.07$ ,  $SE = .03$ , %95 CI  $[-.13, -.01]$ ,  $p = .0259$ ). The indirect effect of basic need frustration on the association between perceived partner responsiveness and cyberstalking was significant (indirect effect =  $-.04$ ,  $SE = .02$ , %95 CI  $[-.08, -.01]$ ; for analysis with outliers, indirect effect =  $-.06$ ,  $SE = .02$ , %95 CI  $[-.10, -.02]$ ) whereas the indirect effect of basic need satisfaction on the association between perceived partner responsiveness and cyberstalking was insignificant (indirect effect =  $.01$ ,  $SE = .02$ , %95 CI  $[-.03, .05]$ ; for analysis with outliers (indirect effect =  $.01$ ,  $SE = .02$ , %95 CI  $[-.03, .05]$ ). At this point, it may be important to emphasize that, in assessing the role of need frustration in the relationship between perceived partner responsiveness and cyberstalking, a new mediation analysis, in which only need frustration was entered as a mediator, also was conducted and the a, b, c and c' paths were all significant, just like in the parallel mediation analysis, reported above. The findings suggest the mediating effect of need frustration in the association between perceived partner responsiveness and cyberstalking.

Table 1  
*Correlations among the study variables*

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
1. CS	1.46 ( <b>1.51</b> )	.55 ( <b>.65</b> )	.91 ( <b>.93</b> )			
2. PPR	7.08 ( <b>6.98</b> )	1.31 ( <b>1.49</b> )	-.21**( <b>-.23***)</b>	.94 ( <b>.95</b> )		
3. CNF	2.27 ( <b>2.32</b> )	.71 ( <b>.75</b> )	.24***( <b>.26***</b> )	-.36***( <b>-.38***</b> )	.84 ( <b>.86</b> )	
4. CNS	3.99 ( <b>3.98</b> )	.62 ( <b>.63</b> )	-.13 <sup>+</sup> ( <b>-.11</b> )	.44***( <b>.42***</b> )	-.69***( <b>-.66***</b> )	.86 ( <b>.86</b> )
5. RD	50.56 ( <b>51.88</b> )	68.28 ( <b>69.56</b> )	-.13 ( <b>-.10</b> )	-.05 ( <b>-.05</b> )	-.02 ( <b>.004</b> )	.06 ( <b>.06</b> )

*Note.* CS = Cyberstalking; PPR = Perceived Partner Responsiveness; CNF = Composite Needs Frustration; CNS = Composite Needs Satisfaction, RD = Relationship Duration, <sup>+</sup> $p < .06$ ,  $*p < .05$ ,  $**p < .01$ ,  $***p < .001$ . The Cronbach alpha values are given in the diagonal. Values with outliers ( $N = 221$ ) included are presented in parentheses and bold. In the Demographic Information Form, the participants were asked to specify the duration of their relationship in years/months. However, some participants wrote it as a number without specifying the year/month. These people were included in all analyses except for analyses including the duration of the relationship, because the inclusion criterion was being in a relationship for over one month, and these people met the criteria even if it was a month or a year. Hence, the associations between the duration of the relationship (RD) and other variables are based on the data obtained from 185 participants (190 in analysis with outliers). The duration of the relationship stated by the participants was converted into months and the converted version was used in the analyses. The duration of the relationship ranged from 1 to 420 months in the analysis both with and without outliers.



**Figure 1.** The mediating role of basic psychological need satisfaction and frustration on the association between perceived partner responsiveness and cyberstalking. Note. Values with outliers ( $N = 221$ ) included are presented in bold. Standard errors are presented in parentheses. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

## Discussion

This study investigated the relationship between perceived partner responsiveness and cyberstalking and the mediating roles of basic need satisfaction and need frustration on the association between perceived partner responsiveness and cyberstalking in intimate relationships for a sample of people who were in a romantic relationship.

We found that perceived partner responsiveness was negatively correlated with cyberstalking, which is in line with previous findings that people perceive their partner as less responsive when they perceive that their partners monitor their online activities (Norton et al., 2018). This finding is consistent with studies showing that attachment anxiety is related to cyber relational aggression toward the partner (Wright, 2015), partner monitoring on Facebook (Marshall et al., 2013), electronic intrusion (Reed et al., 2016), and different types of jealousy (Knobloch et al., 2001; Marshall et al., 2013). Similarly, previous research shows significant correlations in romantic relationships between perceived partner support and perceived partner psychological aggression for both females and males (Labonté et al., 2021). Our finding is also congruent with previous findings that perceived partner responsiveness is positively related to marital satisfaction (Gadassi et al., 2016) and emotional expression (Ruan et al., 2020) since cyberstalking is a form of aggression in romantic relationships (Watkins et al., 2018).

As we predicted, perceived partner responsiveness was negatively correlated with basic need frustration whereas it was positively correlated with basic need satisfaction. This is congruent with previous findings regarding the relationship between relatedness satisfaction and perceived relationship closeness (Patrick et al., 2007). We also found that basic need frustration was positively correlated with cyberstalking,

while there was a tendency for a negative relationship between basic need satisfaction and cyberstalking, although not significant. These findings agree with previous findings that threatening the need of relatedness was related to the increase in obsessive thoughts (Valshtein et al., 2019). Furthermore, need frustration was negatively related to self-control, which is related to externalizing problems in adolescents in the parental context (Bai et al., 2020). Supporting our findings, previous studies have reported a positive relationship between basic need satisfaction and relationship well-being (Aykutoğlu, 2021) as well as an indirect association between autonomy satisfaction and cyberbullying as a form of aggression (Fousiani et al., 2016). Similarly, both relatedness need satisfaction (positively) and frustration (negatively) are associated with relationship satisfaction (Vanhee et al., 2016).

Regarding mediation, we found a significant indirect effect of basic need frustration on the relationship between perceived partner responsiveness and cyberstalking. In contrast, basic need satisfaction had no indirect effect on this relationship. This finding supports Costa et al.'s (2015) hypothesis that the negative aspects of a relationship are better predicted by need frustration than need satisfaction while the reverse is true for positive aspects of relationship. Costa et al. (2015) found that need frustration predicted negative aspects of relationship (namely, relationship sensitivity) whereas need satisfaction did not. The present study indicates that need frustration is more relevant regarding cyberstalking behaviors since they are maladaptive relationship behaviors with detrimental consequences for the partner (e.g., Reiss et al. 2021). Our finding is also congruent with Uysal et al. (2012), who reported the mediating role of diminished basic need satisfaction on the association between concealing unfavorable information from the partner and relationship wellbeing variables (i.e., satisfaction and commitment). Other studies have demonstrated the mediating role of need frustration on the association between suppression of emotional regulation strategies and illbeing, such as low-level wellbeing and borderline features (Benita et al., 2020; Van der Kaap-Deeder et al., 2021). Finally, Ryan and Deci (2017) argued that individuals coming from a need-frustrating environment may exhibit self-protective and aggressive behaviors. Extending this to our study, relationships with low levels of perceived partner responsiveness can be considered a need-frustrating social context, so individuals within such relationships may display more cyberstalking via experienced need frustration.

The current study has some limitations that deserve discussion. Firstly, due to the design of the present study, it was not possible to test a causal mediational model in which perceived partner responsiveness reduces basic need frustration, which in turn decreases cyberstalking. Related to this, it may even be important to note that Norton et al. (2018) hypothesized that online intrusion can decrease partner responsiveness although they also discussed the reverse direction of this relationship is possible. Secondly, the need frustration and need satisfaction measures were not specific to romantic relationships. Future studies can use measures (e.g., Aykutoğlu, 2021; Patrick et al., 2007) adapted for relationships, such as Olafsen et al. (2021) did for work contexts. Thirdly, consistent with Lalande et al. (2017), future studies could usefully investigate the distinction between basic need satisfaction/frustration from within and outside the romantic relationship. Fourthly, the inclusion of both married and unmarried people in this study may be a limitation. Future research could investigate whether marriage has an effect on the relationships studied. In a similar vein, the wide range of the participants' relationship duration may also be another limitation. Although, available data on the duration of relationship showed that it was no significant effect on study variables, it may be worthwhile for future studies to examine the effect of relationship's duration. Fifthly, our data relied on self-report questionnaires, which may have triggered socially desirable responding. Finally, the sample included individuals in a romantic relationship for over one month rather than specific couples. It would be worthwhile to investigate cyberstalking behaviors in romantic relationships based on data obtained from specific couples. For example, future studies could use the Actor-Partner



Interdependence Model to gather such dyadic data (Ledermann et al., 2011). Despite these limitations, the present study contributes to the literature by revealing the negative relationship between perceived partner responsiveness and cyberstalking and the mediating role of basic need frustration on this relationship.

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