Chapter 2
Cyberstalking Victimization and Perpetration Among Young Adults: Prevalence and Correlates

Argyroula Kalaitzaki
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6416-9740
Laboratory of Interdisciplinary Approaches for the Enhancement of Quality of Life, Hellenic Mediterranean University, Greece

ABSTRACT
Cyberstalking is becoming more common among young adults. The aim of this study was to investigate (1) the prevalence, behaviours, and tactics of both victims and perpetrators of cyberstalking among a sample of Greek undergraduate students; (2) the correlates of victimization and perpetration of cyberstalking to personality, attachment style, and relating to others; and (3) the impact of cyberstalking on victims’ mental health. Results showed that 23.9% of the students were victims and 9% were perpetrators, with females, disproportionately experiencing and inflicting cyberstalking. Negatively close relating (i.e., intrusive and possessive relating) increased the risk of perpetration, whereas relating to others distantly (suspicious and avoidant relating) decreased the risk of victimization. Agreeableness decreased the risk of perpetration. Mother’s affectionless control increased the risk of both perpetration and victimization, and mother’s neglectful parenting increased the risk of perpetrating cyberstalking. Fear, anxiety, and depression were reported by the victims.

INTRODUCTION
Although stalking is not a new behaviour, its emergence into the cyber-world is. Stalking is defined as the behaviors by an individual who engages in a pattern of harassing or threatening acts (Ashcroft, 2001), such as following a person, appearing at a person’s home or place of business, making harassing phone calls, leaving written messages or objects, or vandalizing a person’s property (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000).
The advancement of information and communication technologies, such as the Internet, has offered stalkers an additional and perhaps more effective, though dubious and insidious, way to target their victims and commit their malevolent act; thus, some stalkers have become Cyberstalkers.

Despite experts' and legislators' attempts to define cyberstalking, there is no commonly accepted definition of cyberstalking or technology-aided stalking. In general, the term is used to refer to the repeated pursuit or monitoring of an individual using electronic (e.g., e-mails, blogs, instant messaging, video, chat rooms, on-line social networks, or other websites) or tracking technologies/Internet-capable devices that induces the victim to feel distress, fear, alarm, or concerned for his/her safety (Dreßing, Bailer, Anders, Wagner, & Gallas, 2014; Reynolds, 2010; Reynolds, Henson, & Fisher, 2012). This may involve threatening, coercive, harassing, or intimidating messages or sexual overtones or other unwanted, persistent, and intrusive contact. Cyberstalking is one form of cyberviolence or interpersonal cybercrimes, such as cyberbullying, sexting, cyber dating abuse, and revenge porn (e.g., Backe, Lilleston, & McCleary-Sills, 2018; Clevenger, Navarro, & Gilliam, 2018).

To the author’s knowledge, there is no other study on cyberstalking in Greece. The prevalence of both cyberstalking perpetration and victimization worldwide is also unknown because of considerable disparities in estimates, which are likely due to different definitions, study samples, methodological, and measurement differences across studies. While there is abundant research on cyberstalking victimization, few studies are available on cyberstalking perpetration, particularly due to the difficulty in obtaining offending data (Roberts, 2008).

There are studies that estimate that roughly 5% of college students admit to cyberstalking (Marcum, Higgins, & Ricketts, 2014; Reynolds, 2018; Reynolds et al., 2012; Reynolds, Fisher, & Randa, 2018), whereas there are other studies that indicate significantly higher rates (e.g., 26.5% by Strawhun, Adams, & Huss, 2013). The profile of a cyberstalker is also not well-known, as few studies have examined this topic. Among the demographics that have been identified as risk factors are being women (Reynolds, 2018; Smoker & March, 2017; van Baak & Hayes, 2018), over 21 years old and nonsingle (Reynolds et al., 2012), and being known by the victim, such as ex-partners, friends, or acquaintances (Dreßing et al., 2014). However, other studies have reported that the harasser is predominately male (Dreßing et al. 2014; Reynolds et al., 2012; WHOA, 2013) and single (WHOA, 2013).

Studies have also found that cyberstalking often occurs simultaneously with offline stalking (Dreßing et al. 2014; Groban, 2016; Reynolds & Fisher, 2018), and with other forms of violence, such as sexual (Buzawa, Buzawa, & Stark, 2017) or physical assault (Dreßing et al. 2014; Strawhun et al., 2013), and sexting (Reynolds, 2018). Studies have found that there is an overlap between different forms of online offending (Holt & Bossler, 2014; Reynolds, 2018).

Demographic data on perpetrators are relatively limited. Cyberstalking behaviors are likely to be more prevalent in the population of emerging adults (aged between 18–25 years old; Arnett, 2000; Backe et al., 2018), than in other age groups as they are the highest users of social media and are more likely to use technology to connect with partners in their intimate relationships (Boyle & O’Sullivan, 2014; Dewing, 2010). Moreover, the relationships in this age group are characterized by greater emotional intensity, importance, and commitment compared to earlier ages (Collins, 2003), which might increase potential distress over loss and ‘‘difficulty letting go’’ during the process of adjusting to a breakup (Lee & O’Sullivan, 2014).

Scarce research exists on the personality of cyberstalkers and cyberstalking victims. Cyberstalkers are low on agreeableness, conscientiousness, and emotional stability, and high on extraversion (O’Riordan & O’Connell, 2014), while other studies have described cyberstalkers as introverted (Wall, 2007). Other
Related Content

Happy Measure: Augmented Reality for Mobile Virtual Furnishing
[www.igi-global.com/article/happy-measure-augmented-reality-mobile/76333?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/article/happy-measure-augmented-reality-mobile/76333?camid=4v1a)

Information in the Situation
[www.igi-global.com/chapter/information-situation/63850?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/chapter/information-situation/63850?camid=4v1a)

Send Nudes? : Sexting Experiences and Victimization Relating to Attachment and Rejection Sensitivity – Incorporating Sexual Minority Perspectives
Alaina Brenick, Kaitlin M. Flannery, Emily Karr and Daniell Carvalheiro (2020). *Recent Advances in Digital Media Impacts on Identity, Sexuality, and Relationships* (pp. 119-143).
[www.igi-global.com/chapter/send-nudes-/241036?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/chapter/send-nudes-/241036?camid=4v1a)

Reliability and Validity of Low Temporal Resolution Eye Tracking Systems in Cognitive Performance Tasks