

A DYADIC VIEW OF FLEDGLING RELATIONSHIPS IN A NON-WESTERN
CONTEXT: A TEST OF THE INTERPERSONAL MODEL OF INTIMACY

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ABSTRACT

Self-disclosure and perceived partner responsiveness are two principal components of the intimacy that aims to explain relationship functioning. This theory has been tested in the past but all focused on long-term married couples with Western samples. The current study examines the basic tenets of the process model of intimacy in the context of a fledgling relationship in a non-Western cultural setting. Couples who were in the early stages of a romantic relationship (N=151) reported their intimacy in two sessions three weeks apart. Between the two sessions, they completed a 21-day diary assessing self-disclosure and perceived partner responsiveness. Dyadic analyses using multilevel modeling provided evidence for the reciprocal links between self-disclosure and perceived responsiveness. Additionally, perceived responsiveness partially mediated the effects of disclosure on increases in intimacy. These findings demonstrated that the current conceptions of the interpersonal model of intimacy generalize across early stages of romantic relationships and across a non-Western cultural context.

Keywords: self-disclosure, responsiveness, Actor-partner interdependence model, dyadic

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Betul Urganci is a second year PhD student in the department of Human Development at Cornell University. She graduated with Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology and minor degree in Communication and Design from Bilkent University in 2015. During her undergraduate studies, she worked on a senior thesis about the role of social inclusion in emotion recognition accuracy toward in-group and out-group members. She then completed a Master of Arts degree in Psychology from Bilkent University in 2017. She worked as a research fellow funded by the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey under the supervision of Dr. Gül Günaydın and Dr. Emre Selçuk. During her master degree, she was also a teaching assistant for Interpersonal Relationships and Applied Social Psychology courses. For her master thesis, she investigated whether non-verbal behaviors predict explicit and implicit first impressions during acquaintance process. She is currently working under the supervision of Dr. Anthony Ong in Human Health Labs at Cornell University. Her current research interests are factors that enhance intimacy and factors that increase the prevalence of infidelity (i.e.: perceived partner responsiveness), particularly in the dyadic settings.

To *Duru*

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

We come into the world with a drive to form and maintain intimate relationships (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Perhaps because of this important psychological need, intimacy has taken a lot of attention from researchers as well as the lay public. It is now consistently documented in the relationship literature that intimacy is strongly associated with couples' relationship satisfaction and well-being (P. Greeff, 2001; Yoo, Bartle-Haring, Day, & Gangamma, 2014). Importantly, the lack of intimacy in romantic relationships has negative consequences such as destructive conflict, seeking couple therapy, and relationship dissolution (Doss, Simpson, & Christensen, 2004; Waring, 2013).

Interpersonal Process Model of Intimacy

Since intimacy is a multi-faceted process, researchers have defined intimacy from very different perspectives (Laurenceau, Rivera, Schaffer, & Pietromonaco, 2004; Reis, 2017). According to *the interpersonal process model of intimacy* (IPM) proposed by Reis and Shaver (1988) and extended by Reis and Patrick (1996), self-disclosure and perceived partner responsiveness are two key components in facilitating intimate relationships. The process is activated when one person discloses personally revealing information or feeling to the other. Self-disclosures can have positive and negative valence and they can be verbal and non-verbal. However, the important thing is disclosures should be reciprocal and gradually developing. The second critical component in the model is perceived partner responsiveness which is defined as a perception that individuals communicate understanding, validation and caring to their partners'

disclosure. If the listener responds to the disclosure in an understanding, validating, and caring manner, then it provides more opportunities for subsequent self-revelations to the partner. Therefore, there is a reciprocal relationship between self-disclosure and perceived responsiveness. It is important to note that to have an intimate interaction, the person who discloses needs to perceive the listener as responsive. Also, the model suggests that intimacy development processes are dyadic and interactive such that both interaction partners are simultaneously filling the role of discloser and listener. And there is a feedback system where past instances shape future instances.

Several studies provided empirical support for the IPM using different research methods. Studies using experience sampling (Laurenceau, Barrett, & Pietromonaco, 1998), daily interactions (Lippert & Prager, 2001), couple discussion (Manne et al., 2004) and daily experience research (Laurenceau, Barrett, & Rovine, 2005) showed that self-disclosure promotes perceived responsiveness which in turn lead to greater feelings of intimacy among married couples. Additional evidence from an intervention study demonstrated that intimacy-enhancing interventions can improve relationship closeness for breast cancer patients and their spouses (Manne & Badr, 2008).

Conceptions of Intimacy in Different Cultures

Previous literature has drawn a big picture of how intimacy develops in relationships. Yet, several pieces are still missing. One important piece is the lack of understanding whether culture plays a differential role in intimacy development. This is because research on the IPM continues to be based on Western people (mainly North American samples) in relationships. Findings obtained from these samples might not be generalized to other samples due to differences in how cultures define the self in relation to others. North American cultures are grounded in

individualist and independent constructions of the self. Independent self-construal frames relationships as a voluntary and secondary product. In contrast, the interdependent self-construal is rooted in social network and people with the interdependent self-construal frame relationships as an inevitable consequence of social existence (Adams, Anderson, & Adonu, 2004; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Since intimacy is embedded in particular cultural worlds, these two views of self-construal might lead to differences in how intimacy develops in relationships (Adams et al., 2004).

One of the differences in the intimacy development process might be related to self-disclosure. The literature on intimate self-disclosure suggests that self-disclosure can be more critical in the Western cultures for three reasons. First, if self-revelations lead to more intimate connections, then it may be more important for people with independent self-construal who do not readily afford social connections. Second, revealing personal information might make an individual vulnerable. Self-revelations might lead to less dangers in the cultures promote independence since individuals share fewer overlapping links. Lastly, sharing sensitive information might be more rewarding in independent settings where emotions are seen as a private experience compare to interdependent settings where emotions are experienced as interpersonal events. Therefore, sharing emotional experience would lead to self-validation and self-expansion in the independent settings (Adams et al., 2004).

The importance of perceived partner responsiveness in the North American culture might be another explanation for difference in intimacy development. The suffocation model of marriage suggests that contemporary American couples expect from their marriages to help them to fulfill their psychological needs such as esteem and self-actualization in addition to fulfilling their emotional, interpersonal, economic and practical needs (Finkel, Hui, Carswell, & Larson, 2014). Therefore, the core features of the self should be recognized, valued and supported by

romantic partner to help meeting their needs for esteem and self-actualization. Thus, perceiving one's partner responsive might be more critical issue in the Western world. Indeed, a cross-cultural study among married and long-term co-habiting individuals demonstrated that perceived partner responsiveness was a stronger predictor of well-being in the United States compare to Japan (Tasfiliz et al., 2018).

Given the possible differences in self-disclosure and perceived partner responsiveness, whether the IPM would generalize to a non-Western culture is an open empirical question. To investigate this question, the current study tested the basic premises of the IPM by studying heterosexual couples from Turkey. Situated between Europe and Asia, Turkey has traditionally considered as a collectivist culture (Hofstede, 2001). However, diverse values such as gender equality and individualism have also influenced cultural practices of Turkey. Despite these trends towards individualism, relatedness and emotional interdependency are still core characteristics of Turkish cultural context. Changes in gender equality and individualism also influences initiation of relationship and marriages in Turkey from family-arranged to self-choice marriages (Imamoğlu & Selcuk, 2018; Kagitcibasi, 1996). Importantly, even when the marriage is self-choice, family approval would still be a critical in interdependent cultures like Turkey. Although egalitarianism becomes more salient in romantic relationships in Turkey, traditional gender roles might still influence expectations of relationships. Moreover, it is noted that Turkish culture has greater expectations for women to be understanding, validating and supportive of their partner's needs (Imamoğlu & Selcuk, 2018). Therefore, given the cultural grounding of relationships in Turkey, testing the basic premises of the IPM here will contribute to the generalizability of the model.

Conceptions of Intimacy in Fledgling Relationships

Most of the work testing the IPM based on married couples and to our knowledge no study tested the premises of the IPM in fledgling relationships which has referred to an early stage of a romantic relationship. Why is it important to test the model of intimacy in fledgling relationships? First, our reading of the IPM is that it is a quintessentially theory about how intimacy develops in new relationships. Therefore, studying fledgling relationships would be a direct test of the model. Second, a critical question to ask, therefore, is can we generalize existing empirical evidence with established couples to fledgling relationships? The literature suggests that it is not appropriate to assume that what we see in married or co-habiting couples will generalize to fledgling ones (Arriaga, 2001; Campbell & Stanton, 2014). There is a limited longitudinal research on newly-formed relationships and existing literature suggests that evaluations in early relationships are easily influenced (Fletcher, Simpson, & Thomas, 2000a; Joel & Eastwick, 2018). Therefore, systematic investigations of interpersonal constructs like perceived responsiveness and self-disclosure assessed in fledgling relationships is needed before coming to definitive conclusion.

What self-disclosure and perceived responsiveness contribute to the intimacy might be different for couples in fledgling relationships. As it was described in the acquaintance process with the metaphor of peeling an onion, self-disclosure is gradually developed in a sense that peeling one layer at a time where we eventually reach to individuals' most core aspects (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Reis & Patrick, 1996) . People are more likely to communicate personal facts and information in the beginning whereas they are more likely to communicate personal feelings and opinions later while getting to know each other (Derlaga & Berg, 1987). Disclosing feelings are considered to be more related to the experience of intimacy since it allows people to know the

most core aspects of the disclosers (Reis & Shaver, 1988). Therefore, people who are in the beginning of their relationships might disclose more personal facts than personal feelings which in turn might be less defining feature of their intimacy levels. In addition to that, how perceived partner responsiveness assessed in newly-formed relationships predict later long-term relationship functioning remains an open question since most longitudinal relationship studies have sampled individuals in established relationships (Joel & Eastwick, 2018). Also as relationships progress, the degree to which romantic partner provides responsiveness and support becomes more important (Holmes, Clark, & Reis, 2004). To sum, all of the research testing the IPM has focused on intimacy development in established relationships, compare to actual development of intimacy of new relationships. It would be important to investigate whether self-disclosure and perceived responsive are also strong defining features of intimacy in newly-formed relationships.

A Dyadic Perspective on Intimacy

As stated earlier, the IPM proposes that both members of a dyad are simultaneously filling the role of discloser and listener meaning that intimacy processes are dynamic and dyadic (Reis & Shaver, 1988). According to interdependence theory, interacting partners influence each other's experiences such as motivations, preferences and behaviors (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978). Thus, it is not surprising that the members of a given dyad are behaviorally and psychologically interdependent. To account for interdependence between members of a given couple, treating the couple dyad as the unit of analysis, instead of individual members, would provide better understanding of intimacy development.

Given the possible lack of independence between members of a dyad, actor-partner interdependence model (APIM) has proposed theoretical foundations for understanding issues of

interdependence in close relationships (Kenny, Kashy, & Cook, 2006). The APIM discusses that although by its definition, many of the concepts studied by social scientists are interpersonal, social science researchers often tend to focus on individual. However, an outcome in an interpersonal relation is a function of the target individual's characteristics (actor effect) as well as the partner's characteristics (partner effect). For instance, Partner A's intimacy is a function of his/her disclosure (actor) and Partner B's disclosure (partner). Although a typical APIM would involve one predictor and one outcome variable from each partner, we proposed a mediation model by including perceived responsiveness as the mediator between disclosure and intimacy as Reis and Shaver's intimacy model (1988) suggested. Fig. 1 depicts the generic actor-partner interdependence mediation model (APIMeM) that guided the current study (Ledermann & Macho, 2009).

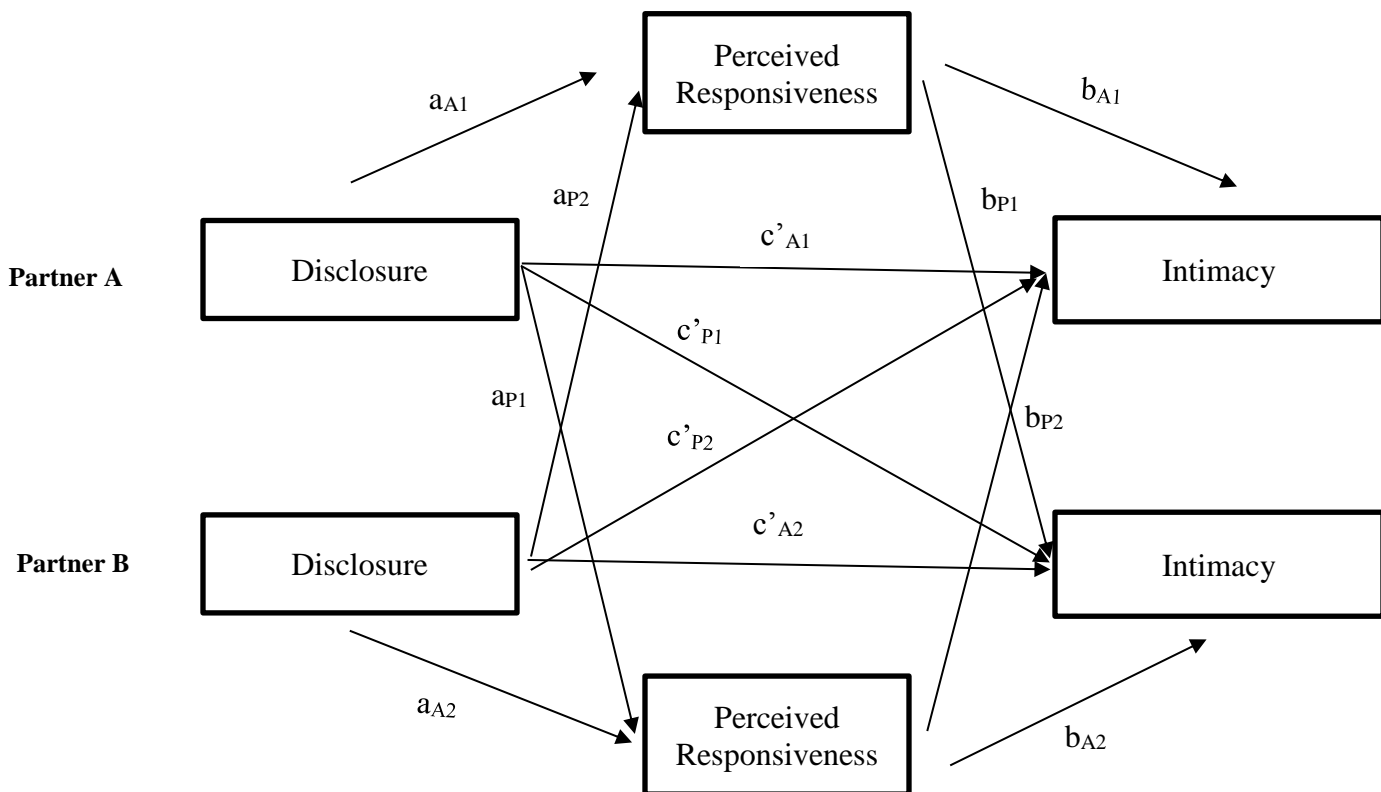


Figure 1. Theorized APIMeM examining the effects of disclosure on intimacy through perceived responsiveness. Actor effects were denoted as “A” and partner effects were denoted as “P”.

Based on the APIMeM, four types of mediation models can be examined: *actor-actor*, *partner-actor*, *actor-partner* and *partner-partner models*. To our knowledge, the literature on the IPM has focused on the actor-actor mediation model. Although two studies also included perceived partner disclosure in their analyses (Laurenceau et al., 2005; Manne et al., 2004), the present study is different from them for two reasons. First, they included individuals’ perceptions about their partners’ disclosure whereas we included partner-reports of disclosure. Second, although perceived partner disclosure was investigated (partner-actor model), some of the more interesting hypotheses reside in partner effects of perceived responsiveness, or in other words whether the effects of Partner A’s rating of disclosure on Partner A’s intimacy is mediated by Partner B’s perceived responsiveness (partner-partner model) or whether the effects of Partner B’s rating of disclosure on Partner A’s intimacy is mediated by Partner B’s perceived responsiveness (actor-partner model). The investigation of both actor and partner effects would help us demonstrate whether intimacy solely depends on individuals’ own disclosure and perceived responsiveness or also those of their partner’s.

Present Study

Despite the advances in our understanding of how self-disclosure and perceived responsiveness shape daily functioning of established marriages, there are at least two important issues yet to be addressed. First, although the process model has important implications for intimacy development, almost no research tested the premises of the model in newly-formed romantic relationships. Second, virtually all evidence testing the IPM comes from studies with

Western (mainly North American) samples. Therefore, the present study aimed to investigate basic tenets of Reis and Shaver's process model in fledgling relationships in a non-Western cultural setting using the APIM.

Heterosexual dating couples who were in the first three months of their relationships reported their intimacy in two sessions three weeks apart. Between these two sessions, they completed 21-day diary assessing self-disclosure and perceived responsiveness. Given the hypothesized reciprocal nature of disclosure and perceived responsiveness, we first tested whether previous day's disclosure predicted increases in next day's perceived responsiveness (actor effect 1). Also, to see whether perceiving partner as responsive would provide subsequent self-disclosure as the IPM suggested, we also examined whether previous day's perceived responsiveness predicted increases in next day's self-disclosure (actor effect 2). Further, to extend the basic premises of the IPM, we investigated similar daily associations at partner levels. Specifically, we tested whether previous day's partner's disclosure predicted increases in next day's actor's perceived responsiveness (partner effect 1) and whether previous day's partner's report of perceived responsiveness predicted increases in next day's actor disclosure (partner effect 2). We also explored possible links between actor and partner disclosure (partner effect 3) and actor and partner perceived responsiveness (partner effect 4).

We tested four different mediation models using APIMeM. Based on previous literature (Laurenceau et al., 2005), we expected that actor's rating of perceived responsiveness would mediate the impact of self (*actor-actor model*) and partner disclosure (*partner-actor model*) on increases in actor's intimacy. Extending prior work on the interpersonal process model, we also explored whether partner's rating of perceived responsiveness would mediate the association between self-disclosure and actor's intimacy (*partner-partner model*). Similarly, we also tested

whether partner's rating of perceived responsiveness would mediate the association between partner disclosure and actor's intimacy (*actor-partner model*).

Given the mixed literature on gender differences in intimacy-related processes (Dindia & Allen, 1992; Laurenceau et al., 2004; Reis, 1998), we explored whether gender moderated the associations of disclosure and perceived responsiveness with increases in intimacy?

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

Participants and Procedure

The data for the present study were collected as part of a longitudinal study on romantic relationship development in young adults residing in Turkey. All data were collected before any analyses were conducted and all data exclusions are reported. We aimed to recruit 150 heterosexual dating couples who had been in a romantic relationship for one to three months and also who completed pre-assessment, daily diaries and post-assessment of the study. Initially, 165 couples who met the relationship duration criterion of being in an exclusive relationship for a maximum of three months signed up for the study. Two couples stopped being involved in the study during the diary phase due to break-up. Data from 9 couples were not included in the analysis because at least one member of these couples left the study during the diary phase. Lastly, data from 2 couples were also excluded in the analysis because at least one member of these couples did not participate in the post-diary assessment. After these exclusions, the final sample included 151 couples. Since we achieved our planned sample size, we stopped data collection at this point. The average age of men and women were 20.87 years ($SD = 2.28$) and

20.26 years ($SD = 1.84$) respectively. The average length of the relationships was 2 months ($SD = 0.5$ months). All participants were native Turkish speakers.

The study involved three phases: pre-assessment, 21 days of daily diary and post-assessment. All parts of research were reviewed and approved by Ethics Board for Research Involving Human Participants at Bilkent University, Turkey. Participants were invited to the lab for pre-assessment to rate their intimacy and demographic questions. Importantly, both members of the couple were invited to the lab at same day but at different time. During this pre-assessment, the researcher explained how to complete daily diary questionnaires to participants.

The day after the pre-assessment, participants started to diary phase. Each day, they received an email providing a link at 8 pm for the online questionnaire that included self-disclosure and perceived responsiveness measures. Those who forgot to complete a diary survey received a reminder email at 10 pm and they were allowed to complete the diary survey until 4 am of the following day. The average number of completed diary survey was 18.86 ($SD = 1.55$) for women and 18.02 ($SD = 2.38$) for men.

After the diary phase, participants were again invited to the lab for post-assessment where they reported intimacy. Participants either received course credit or payment for their part in the study.

Measures

Self-disclosure. Self-disclosure was assessed each evening during daily diary measures for 21 days. Participants were asked to rate the degree to which they disclosed their thoughts (one item) and the degree to which they disclose their emotions (one item) using a 7-point Likert scale (1= Strongly disagree to 7= Strongly agree). Daily self-disclosure was calculated by averaging

these two items for each day. Within-person reliability was 0.94 and between-person reliability over 21 days was 0.99.

Perceived Partner Responsiveness. Perceived partner responsiveness was also assessed each evening for 21 days in the current study. Items were adapted from previous work (Selcuk, Gunaydin, Ong, & Almeida, 2016) that corresponds to core features of responsiveness (Reis & Gable, 2015). Participants were asked to rate the degree to which she or he felt understood, valued and cared for at the end of each day using 7-point Likert scale (1= Strongly disagree to 7= Strongly agree). Daily responsiveness was calculated by averaging these three items for each day. Within-person reliability was 0.92 and between-person reliability over 21 days was 0.99.

Intimacy. We used the Perceived Relationship Quality Components Inventory-short form (PRQC) in pre and post-assessment (Fletcher, Simpson, & Thomas, 2000b). Participants were asked to rate the current partner and relationship on six items capturing relationship satisfaction, commitment, intimacy, trust, passion and love on a 7-point Likert-type scale (ranging from 1= *Not at all* to 7= *A lot*). We ran the main analyses using the single intimacy item. Although using a single-item measure of intimacy might create potential measurement issues, several studies showed that single item measures of such concepts like closeness (Chopik, Kim, & Smith, 2018) and intimacy (Laurenceau et al., 2005; Lippert & Prager, 2001) are valid. We also repeated the analyses with the full scale of PRQC (see Appendix for details).

CHAPTER 3

DATA ANALYTIC STRATEGY

Analyses testing the links between daily self-disclosure and perceived responsiveness were based on 151 couples who were in a relationship for 1-3 months. Since 7 couples did not

have post-diary intimacy data, analyses testing whether perceived responsiveness mediated the association between disclosure and change in intimacy were based on 144 couples.

To account for interdependence of individuals within same dyads, we used multilevel modeling for dyadic data analysis (Kenny et al., 2006). Although conceptually our data structure has three levels (time, person, and couple), it is suggested to analyze as two-level model for two reasons (Kenny et al., 2006): First, the level of time is same for both members of a dyad at each time point since they participated to the study at the same time. Second, since there are only two members in couple level, it doesn't allow for modeling random slope. There are two approaches to estimate the APIM with distinguishable dyads using MLM: The first approach, which is called as interaction model or one-intercept model, uses fixed effect estimates pooled across gender but separate random effects for each gender. The second is the two-intercept model where separate fixed and random effects are estimated for men and women using dummy-coded variables (Bolger & Laurenceau, 2013). Similar to Cooper, Totenhagen, McDaniel and Curren (2018), we utilized one-intercept model in the current study and used interaction terms to test gender differences by entering effect coded gender (*women*= 1, *men*= -1) as a fixed effect. Also, we entered dummy coded variables for women (*women*=1, *men*=0) and men (*women*=0, *men*=1) on the random line in R which allows for interindividual differences in men's and women's intercepts on the outcome.

Based on Kenny et al's (2006) suggestion for over time analyses using MLM, we used the double entry method to restructure the data. Meaning that, each participant's score was entered twice, once in the column for actor and again in the column for partner variables. After restructuring our data, we first conducted a series of t-tests to examine gender differences in the means of all key variables. Then, we used cross-lagged regression model for distinguishable dyad members to examine daily associations between self-disclosure and perceived responsiveness.

The actor effects are the effects for each individual whereas the partner effects are estimates for associations between partners. These APIM models allow use to estimate both association between one's disclosure and his/her own perceived responsiveness (i.e.: actor effects) and associations between his/her partner's disclosure and his/her own perceived responsiveness (i.e.: partner effects). We also tested whether gender moderates these associations.

Lastly, we tested the APIMeM proposed in Figure 1. We computed mean self-disclosure and perceived responsiveness across 21-days for the mediation analyses. As shown in Figure 1, intimacy was treated as an outcome variable that was predicted by actor's disclosure (path a_{A1}) or partner's disclosure (path a_{P1}). We tested whether individual's perceived responsiveness (path b_{A1}) or their partner's report of perceived responsiveness (path b_{P1}) mediates the association between predictor and outcome variable. The mediation effects of perceived responsiveness between disclosure and intimacy were examined through indirect effects ($a_{A1} * b_{A1}$, $a_{A1} * b_{P1}$, $a_{P1} * b_{A1}$, $a_{P1} * b_{P1}$).

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Means, standard deviations, and correlations are presented in Table 1. To explore possible gender differences in person-centered self-disclosure, partner responsiveness and intimacy, independent-samples t-tests were performed. Men and women were not significantly different in their ratings (see Table 1 for t statistics). Also, we presented within-person and cross-partner correlations for non-categorical study variables separately for men and women. All variables of interest were significantly correlated.

Table 1.*Descriptive Statistics and Correlations among Variables.*

Variables	Self-disclosure	PPR	Intimacy Time1	Intimacy Time 2
Self-disclosure ^a	.45**	.92**	.46**	.56**
PPR ^a	.91**	.49**	.42**	.54**
Intimacy Time 1	.50**	.48**	.25**	.65**
Intimacy Time 2	.53**	.55**	.59**	.24**
Men M (SD)	5.47 (0.95)	5.26 (1.04)	6.13 (1.07)	6.15 (1.11)
Women M (SD)	5.33 (0.96)	5.38 (1.03)	6.07 (1.08)	6.08 (1.19)
t-values	.77	.48	.44	.51

Note. Correlations for men appear below the diagonal; correlations for women appear above the diagonal. Correlations that are bold are between dyad members. PPR= perceived partner responsiveness. ** $p < .01$. PPR= perceived partner responsiveness ^aCorrelations of daily variables are provided for individuals' mean scores of these daily variables.

Daily associations between perceived responsiveness and disclosure at individual levels

We implemented APIMs using *dyadr* package (Garcia & Kenny, 2018) in R (Team, 2013) to examine our hypothesis and research questions.¹ Results provided evidence for the reciprocal links between self-disclosure and perceived responsiveness as postulated by the interpersonal process model. Specifically, previous day's self-disclosure predicted increases in next day's perceived responsiveness, after controlling for previous day's responsiveness ($B = 0.05$, $SE = 0.022$, $p = .028$, 95% CI = [0.01, 0.09]). Similarly, previous day's perceived responsiveness predicted increases in next day's self-disclosure, after controlling for previous day's self-disclosure ($B = 0.07$, $SE = 0.02$, $p = .002$, 95% CI = [0.027, 0.119]).

¹ We included gender as a moderator in our preliminary multilevel models, and no significant gender effects were found. Thus, gender effects were not included in any of the daily associations reported in the results.

Daily associations between perceived responsiveness and disclosure at partner levels

We also tested partner effects for the relation between disclosure and perceived responsiveness. Previous day’s partner disclosure did not significantly predict increases in next day’s actor’s perceived responsiveness ($B = 0.03, SE = 0.015, p = .06, 95\% CI = [-0.001, 0.06]$). Previous day’s partner’s report of perceived responsiveness predicted increases in next day’s actor’s self-disclosure, after controlling for previous day’s actor self-disclosure ($B = 0.04, SE = 0.018, p = .044, 95\% CI = [0.00, 0.07]$). Moreover, previous day’s partner disclosure predicted increases in next day’s actor’s disclosure, after controlling for previous day’s actor disclosure ($B = 0.04, SE = 0.018, p = .017, 95\% CI = [0.01, 0.08]$). However, previous day’s partner’s perceived responsiveness did not significantly predict increases in next day’s actor’s perceived responsiveness ($B = 0.03, SE = 0.018, p = .12, 95\% CI = [-0.01, 0.06]$).

Table 2.

Indirect effects predicting intimacy

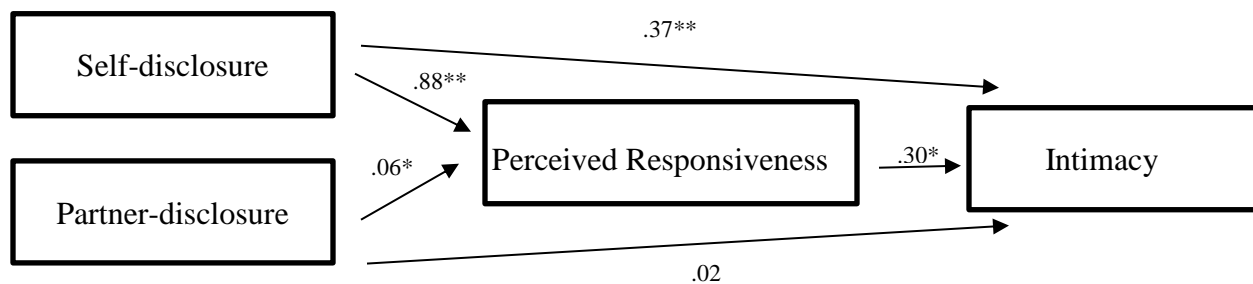
Predictor	Mediator	Outcome	<i>B</i>	95% CI
Actor disclosure	Actor’s perceived responsiveness	Intimacy	0.26*	[0.04, 0.49]
Partner disclosure	Partner’s perceived responsiveness	Intimacy	-0.00	[-0.03, 0.02]
Actor disclosure	Partner’s perceived responsiveness	Intimacy	-0.05	[-0.27, 0.18]
Partner disclosure	Actor’s perceived responsiveness	Intimacy	0.04*	[0.00, 0.04]

Note. *B* = standardized indirect effects. * $p < .05$.

Actor-partner interdependence mediation model

Four APIMeMs testing the links between among disclosure, perceived responsiveness and intimacy are reported in Table 2 and summarized in Figure 2. As we hypothesized, these results suggested that perceived responsiveness completely mediated the association between self-disclosure and increases in intimacy (*actor-actor model*) (Figure 2). Similarly, in support of *partner-actor model*, perceived responsiveness completely mediated the association between partner’s disclosure and increases in intimacy as we predicted. In addition, for an exploratory analyses, we tested whether partner’s rating of perceived responsiveness mediates the association between self-disclosure and actor’s intimacy (*partner-partner model*). We didn’t find support for this mediation model. Lastly, we examined whether partner’s rating of perceived responsiveness would mediate the association between partner disclosure and actor’s intimacy (*actor-partner model*) but this model was not significant either.

A



B

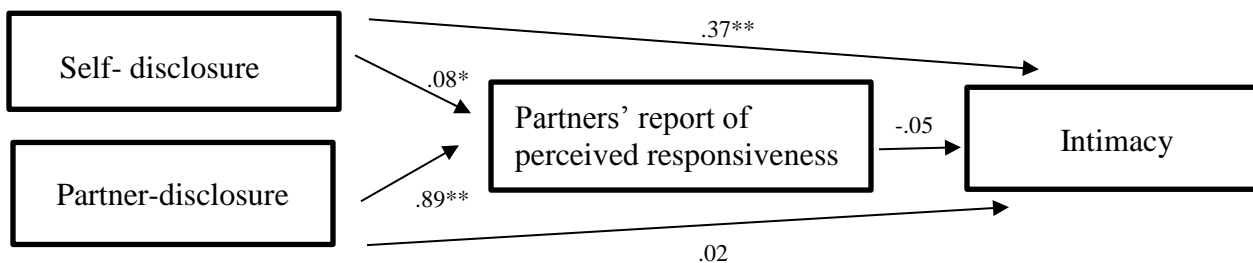


Figure 2. (a) APIMeM examining the effects of self-disclosure and partner disclosure on intimacy mediated by perceived responsiveness (actor-actor and partner-actor models, respectively). (b) APIMeM examining the effects of self-disclosure and partner disclosure on intimacy mediated by partners' report of perceived responsiveness.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The main purpose of this study was to examine basic premises of Reis and Shaver's (1988) interpersonal process model of intimacy in newly-formed relationships in a non-Western cultural context. As hypothesized, our results provided the first empirical evidence that there is a reciprocal link between self-disclosure and perceived responsiveness in newly-formed romantic relationships. For individuals, previous day's self-disclosure predicted increases in next day's perceived responsiveness. Also, previous day's perceived responsiveness predicted increases in next day's self-disclosure suggesting that perceiving romantic partner as responsive gives more opportunities for subsequent disclosures. Overall consistent with the previous literature (Laurenceau et al., 2005; Reis & Shaver, 1988), a daily diary and multilevel approach demonstrated that a reciprocal relationship between self-disclosure and perceived responsiveness can generalize across fledgling relationships and across non-Western cultural settings.

Independent of these actor effects, we also found that previous day's partner's report of perceived responsiveness predicted increases in next day's actor's disclosure. This means that on days that my partner perceives me as responsive, I am much more likely to disclose myself next day. However, previous day's partner disclosure did not predict increases in next day's actor perceived responsiveness. Exploratory analyses indicated that previous day's partner disclosure

predicted increases in next day's actor disclosure which suggested that disclosing personally revealing information is a reciprocal process among dating couples. This result is consistent with the intimacy literature that self-disclosure is mutually reinforcing (Watkins Jr, 1990). The possible reciprocal link between actor and partner perceived responsiveness was explored in this study, and no significant effect was found. In general, these findings revealed that disclosure and perceived responsiveness associations generalize beyond the individual level and emerge within couples, indicating that principal components of intimacy are intertwined in romantic relationships.

We also found that average self-disclosure and perceived responsiveness across 21 days were both associated with increases in intimacy over the 3-week period and perceived responsiveness completely mediated the association between self-disclosure and increases in intimacy as the IPM suggested (Reis & Shaver, 1988). Moreover, consistent with the previous empirical studies (Laurenceau et al., 2005; Manne et al., 2004), perceived responsiveness completely mediated the association between partner disclosure and increases in intimacy. However, exploratory analyses showed that partner's report of perceived responsiveness did not mediate the association between partner disclosure and intimacy, and the association between self-disclosure and intimacy.

The IPM has been repeatedly tested (Laurenceau et al., 1998; Lippert & Prager, 2001), however the generalizability of the theory to other cultures and to newly-formed romantic relationships remained as an open question (Laurenceau et al., 2004). Overall, these findings provide first empirical evidence that the basic premises of intimacy development generalize across early stages of romantic relationships and across non-Western cultural setting. Although Reis and Shaver's model is mainly concerned with a within-person processes, results from this study and a few other research (Laurenceau et al., 2005; Manne et al., 2004) demonstrated that

principal components of intimacy is also influenced by partner's disclosures. Therefore, including partner effects of disclosure into the model would provide better conceptualization for intimacy development in romantic relationships.

It should be noted that there are potential limitations of this study. First, although we found support for the IPM we should be careful about the generalizability of this model since this sample might be close to individualistic views. Although Turkey is considered as a collectivistic culture, there might be some variability within the society (Imamoğlu, 1987). Younger people compared to older and people live in urban areas compared to people in rural areas score higher on individualism in Turkey (Aygün & Imamoğlu, 2002). Since the sample mostly consists of college students living in an urban place, the generalizability of the findings from the current study might be limited. Therefore, future studies should examine the IPM in relationship partners who come from diverse cultural contexts and community samples. Second, using a single-item measure of intimacy might be another limitation in the current study. Using single item measures of such concepts is valid (Chopik et al., 2018; Laurenceau et al., 2005; Lippert & Prager, 2001), however using a more complete measure could have been better in assessing intimacy. However, important work for future studies would be using a longer measurement for intimacy. Third, based on mediation analyses and prediction of the IPM, we implied a direction from disclosures to responsiveness and from responsiveness to intimacy. Since the current study is not an experimental study, we should be careful about implying a direction. However, we ruled out the possibility that greater intimacy leads to greater disclosure and responsiveness as noted in Laurenceau et al.(2005) by including baseline intimacy levels in our analyses.

Conclusion

The current study advances our current conceptualization of intimacy by demonstrating that both disclosures and partner responsiveness are linked to intimacy across couples in newly-formed relationships and across non-Western cultural contexts. Together these results suggest that not only within person-processes but also within-couples process are important for intimacy development in romantic relationships. The research we have presented indicates not only how psychological interventions might be designed but also how each partner's processes are closely connected.

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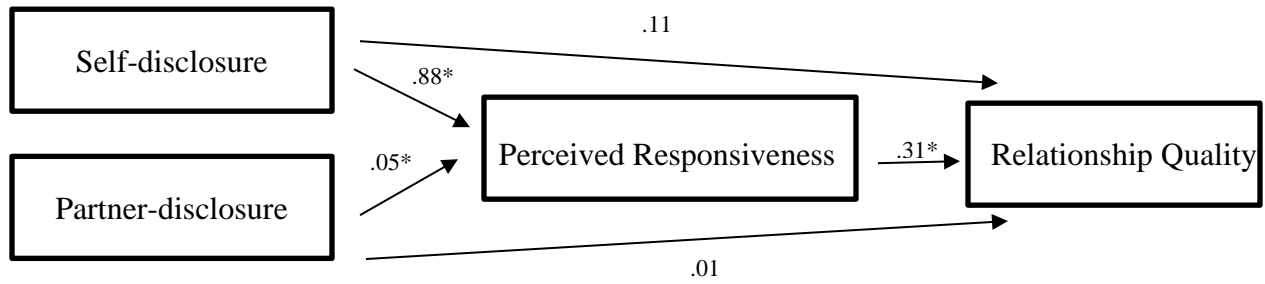
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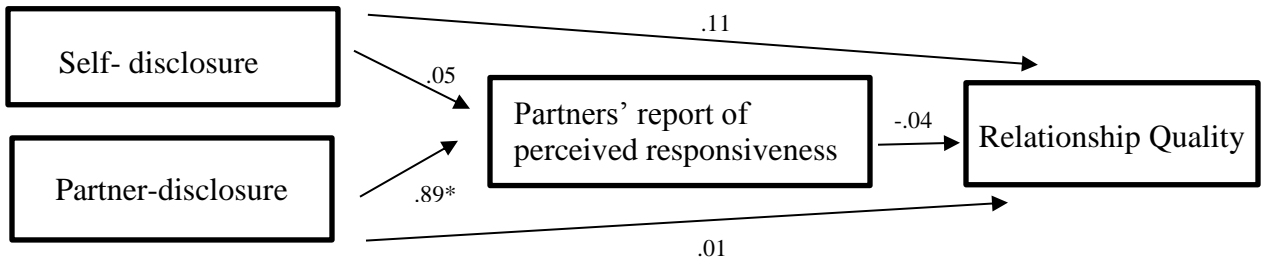
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APPENDIX

A



B



(a) APIMeM examining the effects of self-disclosure and partner disclosure on relationship quality mediated by perceived responsiveness (actor-actor and partner-actor models, respectively). (b) APIMeM examining the effects of self-disclosure and partner disclosure on relationship quality mediated by partners' report of perceived responsiveness.