Technology-Assisted Adolescent Dating Violence and Abuse: A Factor Analysis of the Nature of Electronic Communication Technology Used Across Twelve Types of Abusive and Controlling Behaviour

# Details

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## Topics

## Sample

469 12–18-year-old British adolescents recruited using opportunity and purposive sampling through schools, youth clubs and via snowballing through contacts of the researcher in Central England

## Implications For Parents About

Parental practices / parental mediation

## Implications For Educators About

Digital citizenship

# Abstract

Little is known about the nature of adolescents’ experiences of Technology-Assisted Adolescent Dating Violence and Abuse
(TAADVA) behaviours and whether the Electronic Communication Technology (ECT) used varies depending on the
behaviour. This paper therefore examines the nature of adolescents’ victimisation experience of 12 different TAADVA
behaviours via nine methods of ECT (phone call, text, instant messenger, social networking site, picture message, video chat,
email, chatroom and website/blog). Four-hundred-and-sixty-nine 12–18-year-old British adolescents (59% (n = 277) of
which had dated in the last year) completed a questionnaire regarding their experience of TAADVA. Exploratory factor
analysis was used to examine how adolescents experienced the 12 TAADVA behaviours and through which of the nine
ECTs they were experienced. Adolescents’ experiences of TAADVA victimisation did not significantly vary in terms of the
ECT method used and often multiple TAADVA behaviours were experienced in combination with one another across a
range of ECTs, demonstrated by the identification of nine factors in the analysis. The findings highlight implications for
understanding and raising awareness of the extent and intrusiveness of TAADVA, particularly when multiple abusive and
controlling behaviours are experienced via multiple methods or devices. It is advised that assessing the overall construct of
abusive and controlling behaviour is avoided in future research and instead, the multidimensionality of the factors identified
in the analysis of the TAADVA assessment tool and the different behaviours that these factors encompass need to be
considered.

# Outcome

The experiences of technology-assisted adolescent dating violence and abuse (TAADVA) occurred via different methods (e.g. calling, texting, emailing, sending picture messages and video chat) and did not vary based on the method used. Text messaging followed by SNS and then instant messenger were the most prevalent. There was a connection between different abusive behaviours – for example, sexting pressure and unwanted sexting was associated also with other abusive and controlling behaviours, such as controlling manipulation, intimidation, and coercive pressure. Being checked up on by a partner, having messages checked by a partner, and receiving insults via digital technology were uniquely loaded in the factor structure which may suggest that these behaviours are potentially more common and normalised in adolescent romantic relationships.