Sexuality Education in the Digital Era: Intrinsic and Extrinsic Predictors of Online Sexual Information Seeking Among Youth

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## Sample

"First, secondary school students (12–16 years old) were recruited from randomly selected schools, geographically spread across the Netherlands. Of the 148 randomly selected schools, 60 instantly agreed to participate. For schools that did not agree to participate, a similar school (in terms of size, level [vocational, general or pre-university] and religious denomination) was approached. Participating schools were asked to administer the digital survey in a set number of classes within different class years to end up with a sample of students reflective of the general population of secondary school students aged 12–16. In total, 4,927 secondary school students, spread over 106 schools and 291 classes, participated in the study.

Second, respondents aged 17–24 years were recruited via a sample from the municipal population registers drawn by Statistics Netherlands. Of the 17,368 youth that were invited to fill out the online survey, 4,464 (25.7%) responded. The recruitment of extra respondents by the MHR resulted in an additional 12,423 respondents aged 12 to 24.

Of the total sample of 21,814 respondents, 6% (N = 1,314) was excluded because the respondent reported that h/she did not answer all questions honestly, the respondent turned out to be a non-native speaker, the survey was filled out by a parent, or because inspection of the data showed two or more inconsistencies. As such, the final sample included 20,500 respondents." (Nikkelen et al., 2020, p. 192)

# Abstract

This study aimed to identify demographic, intrinsic and extrinsic predictors of youth’s online sexual information seeking. We used survey data from a large, representative sample of youth (12–24 years) in the Netherlands (N = 20,500). We focused on online sexual information seeking in general, and on two specific types of online sources: interactive user-generated content (UGC) and professional sexuality education content. Findings suggested that LGB youth and youth with more sexual knowledge were more likely to consult sexual information online, both via UGC and via professional websites about sex. Professional content specifically reaches female youth more than male youth, and is more likely to be consulted by youth with more sexual experience and sexual problems. Further, being male, having low sexual esteem and high sexual curiosity were linked to a higher use of interactive UGC. Finally, only communication with friends about sex, but not with parents or partners, nor the amount and appreciation of school-based sexuality education received, was related to a higher use of online sexual information seeking, notably expert sources of sexual information.

# Outcome

"The present study extends such findings by showing that this may only be the case for visiting professional sexual education websites. Males, in turn, were more likely to consult UGC. Moreover, males searched more for sexual information online in general in our study, which could entail other sources of sexual information such as pornography." (Nikkelen et al., 2020, p. 196)

"Our findings show that obtaining sexual information through social media (e.g., interactive UGC) is mostly related to young people’s sense of their sexual openness and self-views (i.e., sexual curiosity and sexual selfesteem). Sexually experienced youth and youth with sexual problems, on the other hand, were more likely to visit professional sexual education websites specifically, but these factors did not have an association with consulting UGC."(Nikkelen et al., 2020, p. 196)

"Similar to youth with more sexual experience and problems, a higher likelihood of searching for sexual information online in general, and visiting sexual education websites, was found for youth that talked more about sex with their friends."(Nikkelen et al., 2020, p. 196)

"While the associations with communication with friends were rather robust, this was not the case for communication with parents and sexual education in schools."(Nikkelen et al., 2020, p. 196)