Adolescent sexting from a social learning perspective

# Details

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* Social mediation
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## Sample

357 students aged between 15 and 21 years from 4 secondary schools

## Implications For Parents About

Parenting guidance / support

## Implications For Educators About

Other

# Abstract

The purpose of this study is to analyze which components of the social learning theory are
associated with adolescents’ engagement in sexting among a sample of 357 respondents.
Additionally, we distinguish between two types of online sexual self-disclosure: sexting
within and outside of a romantic relationship. The results indicate that the extent to which
adolescents hold positive attitudes towards the behavior and the extent to which they perceive that their peers approve of sexting, are associated with their engagement in sexting
both within and outside of a romantic relationship, when controlling for age, gender,
school track and internet use. Sexting outside of a romantic relationship was also influenced by the thrill that young people get out of engaging in this behavior. The discussion
addresses the implications of these findings for prevention programs, practice and future
research, such as the necessity for future studies to ask with whom participants have
engaged in sexting.

# Outcome

"The present study makes a distinction between sexting with a romantic partner and engagement in sexting with someone else than a romantic partner. While sexting within a romantic relationship, boys were more likely to have engaged in sexting. Yet, there were no gender differences for sexting outside of a romantic relationship. Sexting and online sexual risks behavior were associated with perceived peer approval. Sexting is comparable to other adolescent risk behavior in which young people report that their friends approved of it, such as smoking or alcohol use. We did not find evidence that observing similar behavior from others, such as celebrities, through online media might contribute to engagement in similar behavior by adolescents, neither perceived parental attitudes towards sexting.
The use of ‘‘peer education” has proven to be successful in traditional sexual health education. The more adolescents justify engagement in sexting and hold positive attitudes towards sexting, the more likely they will be to engage in sexting themselves. Therefore, educational efforts should educate young people about problematic forms of sexting and they should teach adolescents to engage in the behavior when the communication is anonymized, and reciprocal." (Van Ouytsel et al., 2017, pp. 293-296)