Sexting en adolescentes: Prevalencia y comportamientos

Engl. transl.: Sexting in adolescents: Prevalence and behaviours

# Keywords

* Sexting
* adolescence
* prevalence
* normalisation
* willingness
* social networking sites
* gender
* education

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## Topics

* Risks and harms
* Access, inequalities and vulnerabilities
* Content-related issues
* Wellbeing
* Other

## Sample

The sample comprised 3,314 adolescents (48.6% girls) aged between 12 and 16 years (Mage=13.63, SDage=1.23) recruited from 15 secondary schools in the south of Spain. Specifically, they came from the provinces of Seville, Huelva and Córdoba in the Region of Andalusia

## Implications For Educators About

Other

## Implications For Policy Makers About

# Abstract

Sexting is among the practices used by young people to explore their sexuality. Although an educational response to all facets of this phenomenon is recommended, little research has been published to date in Spain that analyses its prevalence by differentiating between the different types of sexting behaviours: sending, receiving, third-party forwarding, and receiving via an intermediary. This gap in the research is addressed by exploring: 1) Sexting prevalence, differentiating between behaviours; 2) Relationships between sexting behaviours and gender, age, sexual orientation, having a romantic/sexual partner, social networking sites used, and the degree of normalisation and willingness to sext; 3) Gender-based differences. In total, 3,314 adolescents aged 12 to 16 years participated in the study. The most frequent sexting behaviours were identified as receiving and receiving via an intermediary, followed by third-party forwarding and the sending of sexual content. The relative importance of each analysed variable depended on the specific sexting behaviour and the participants’ gender. The results highlight the need to disentangle the diversity behind sexting behaviours and to address each one in an educational setting. This more detailed look at the different behaviours can be used as the basis for raising awareness and decision-making in education.

# Outcome

This study advances knowledge of sexting, going beyond sending and receiving to also encompass the forwarding of a personally received sext and the further transmission of a third-party sexting message. Specifically, more than 2 in 25 teenagers send or forward sexual content, while more than 1 in 5 receive it directly from the creator, and more than 1 in 4 teenagers receive it via an intermediary. In addition, typically non-consensual sexting behaviors are more frequent than typically consensual ones.
The relative importance attached to each analysed variable is shown to depend on the specific sexting behaviour and the participants’ gender. Although boys engage more than girls across all sexting behaviours, sending is the only behaviour not predicted by gender. Results also reflect that age is related to all sexting behaviours, except sending in boys. Ojeda et al. (2020: 15) suggest that "educational efforts should be made to promote sexual education early on".
Results show that sexual orientation predicts involvement in sending sexts. Specifically, adolescents who identify as non- heterosexual participate more in this practice, but not in other behaviours. Having or having had a romantic/sexual partner in the last three months predicts involvement across all sexting behaviours for both boys and girls. Ojeda et al. (2020: 16) highlight that "the Snapchat platform is used more to exchange consensual sexual content between romantic/sexual partners, although a study of whether factors including pressure and coercion exert an influence is needed. In contrast, Facebook and Instagram are more frequently used for generally non-consensual forms of sexting".
The authors also remark that sexting normalisation increases the likelihood of practicing all sexting behaviours, except sending. Furthermore, in boys, it does not predict third-party forwarding. Ojeda et al. (2020: 16) point out that although the sharing of sexual content is far from normative behaviour, it is sufficiently widespread and standardised, meaning that education and prevention initiatives to combat its potential consequences, especially non-consensual sharing, are strongly justified, the authors suggest that "a better approach to prevent potential negative consequences of sexting may be to focus on social norming approaches, acknowledging that not all adolescents sext and, excluding non-consensual sexting behaviours, everyone is free to decide whether to engage or not" (Ojeda et al., 2020:16)