What are you sexting? Parental practices, sexting attitudes and behaviors among Italian adolescents

# Details

## Year

2020

## DOI

10.1186/s40359-020-00425-1

## Issued

2020

## Language

English

## Volume

8

## Issue

1

## Start Page

## End Page

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## Type

Journal article

## Journal

BMC Psychology

## Publisher

Springer Science and Business Media LLC

## Topics

* Social mediation
* Internet usage, practices and engagement
* Risks and harms

## Sample

Participants were 541 Italian adolescents (60% males; 40% females) aged 14 to 19 years (Mage = 16,19 years, SDage = 1,31), living in the North of Italy.

## Implications For Parents About

Parental practices / parental mediation

# Abstract

Background
Sexting has recently emerged as a public health and social issue. The present study had two aims: a) to preliminarily test adolescent gender differences on parental practices regarding adolescent online life, parental monitoring, adolescent attitude towards sexting and sexting behaviors; b) to separately test for male and female adolescents a conceptual model in which sexting behaviors are explained by the parental practices and monitoring, with the mediation of adolescent negative attitude towards sexting.

Methods
Direct and indirect links between the variables in the model were investigated. The study was carried out with 541 participants. Participants were Italian adolescents (60% males; 40% females) aged 14 to 19 years (Mage = 16,19 years, SDage = 1,31).

Results
Results suggested that females sent more multimedia sexts, had a higher perception of risk associated with sexting and reported higher scores for both parental practices regarding adolescent online life and parental monitoring. Rules on Contents, Parental Knowledge, Adolescent Disclosure, and Parental Control resulted to be linked to both sexting attitudes and behaviors for male and female adolescents.

Conclusions
Findings emphasize the important role that parents play in shaping attitudes and behaviors of both daughters and sons during adolescence.

# Outcome

"Our study aimed at testing a conceptual model in which
parental practices regarding adolescent online life and
parental monitoring explained adolescent sexting behaviors
through the mediation of adolescent negative attitude
towards sexting.
Consistent with previous evidence [9, 67, 71], our preliminary
results on gender differences regarding sexting
frequency among adolescents showed that females sent
more multimedia sexts but also had a higher perception
of risks associated with sexting if compared to males. [...] It is possible
that for females some other factors associated with
motivation for sexting (e.g. peer or partner pressure, impress
someone they like, blackmail) impact on the choice
to engage in sexting behaviors. [...] Preliminary results highlighted some gender differences
as well: females scored higher on all the variables
investigating both parental practices regarding their online
life (except for Rules on Contents) and parental
monitoring. [...]
a negative attitude towards sexting was found to be associated
with less engagement in sexting behaviors for
both males and females. Therefore, adolescents who are
more aware about the risks connected to sexting are less
prone to send both text and multimedia sexts. [...]
More in depth, an interesting result is that among parental
practices regarding adolescent online life, only
Rules on Content resulted to directly (and indirectly
only for females) explain both adolescent sexting attitudes
and behaviors. Rules on Contents provided by parents
contributed to shape negative attitudes towards
sexting and to decrease adolescent engagement in sexting
behaviors. This result, albeit unexpected, highlights
the importance for parents to control and provide rules
on the contents to which the adolescent may have access
rather than on the time spent online. (Confalonieri et al., 2020, pp. 7-8)