



SEXTING BEHAVIOUR AMONG COLLEGES OF EDUCATION STUDENTS IN KWARA STATE: COUNSELLING IMPLICATIONS

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Abstract

Sexting is a relatively new youth and students' phenomenon made popular by the use of technology. Sexting refers to youth transmitting sexually explicit messages and/or sexually explicit photographs of oneself or others through electronic devices like cellular phones, tablets, and the Internet. This study examined attitude of students towards sexting in Colleges of Education in Kwara State. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population for the study were the students in Colleges of Education, while the sample were all 200 level students in colleges of Education. Simple random sampling techniques was used to select 100 students each from Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin and College of Education Oro. The researcher randomly selected 4 schools from each college which were school of Art and Social Science, School of Science, School of Language and School of Education. 25 students were sampled from each School in Colleges of Education in Kwara State. The researcher's designed questionnaire titled Attitude of Students towards Sexting in Colleges of Education Questionnaire was used as an instrument to elicit data from the respondents. The study showed that attitude of students towards sexting in colleges of education was negative. However, it was therefore recommended that students should be periodically sensitized on the consequences of sexting and the need to avoid sexting related behaviours. It was also recommended that students should be orientated on the need to maintain current attitude towards sexting which was found to be negative especially by counsellors.

Keyword: Sexting, College, Behaviour, Disposition, Counsellor

Introduction

Sexting, the act of transmitting or sharing sexually explicit photographs or text messages over mobile phones and other handheld devices, is the most modern and problematic misuse of technology. The phrase, which combines texting with sex in the broad meaning of sending a text that may or may not include photographs, became well-known in the early years of the twenty-first century. With the proliferation of camera phones and smartphones with internet connectivity that may be used to send explicit images in addition to texts, sexting has grown increasingly widespread. However, sexting could mean sharing of sexually explicit or provocative content (text messages, photographs, and videos) via a smartphone, the internet, or social media (Chalfen, 2009)

The exchanging of sexually explicit material via technology is referred to as sexting. The primary and secondary varieties of sexting have a big impact on how this issue is defined. In

the first instance, kids send sexts to just two persons without sharing them with anybody else. Secondary sexting is when someone sends sexts to someone other than the original receiver. It is important to note that whereas primary sexting typically involves consent (with rare exceptions, like sextortion), secondary sexting is more likely to be non-consensual and has a bigger negative effect (Lievens, 2014).

Sex educationists have called for the expansion of sex education beyond its traditional cultural or scientific limitations in a number of studies on the subject. Sex education covers more than just medical topics including anatomy, reproduction, illness, and pregnancy prevention. Sex education encompasses components of sexual deviance, a focus on fantasy as well as sexual behavior, gender role indoctrination with reference to interpersonal behavior, and the function and creation of physical pleasure in our life. Experts in the development of the Family Life/HIV Education Curriculum in Nigeria



primarily use this strategy (the official sex education curriculum in Nigerian schools). According to Adunola (2005), sex education is the machining of the sexual act. Additionally, he said that sex education is a cunning effort to instill in young people an unhealthy fascination with sex. According to his research, Nigerian cultural diversity, multiculturalism, ethics, social status, and other traditions serve as catalysts that prevent the successful implementation of sex education in the nation by perpetuating rules and norms that influence the perception of parents, teachers, and others.

Sexting seems to have different effects on boys and girls. Girls are typically more at risk because they experience more insults and humiliation, which harms reputation (Wood, Barter, Stanley, Aghtaie & Larkins, 2015). Boys may then benefit from these favourable effects, such as enhanced acceptance among peer group (Burén & Lunde, 2018). The sexual double standard that governs sexting is shown by this reality, as girls are more likely to have their reputations ruined and to experience the harmful effects of this phenomena. The roles that boys and girls play in the bargaining process and the results by gender so appear to be explained by distinct patterns (Wood et al., 2015).

Sexting has become common among teenagers in recent years as a result of the majority of them growing up with access to sex and other sexually explicit material through a range of media (Clark-Flory, 2009). Teenagers frequently think that engaging in this behaviour is an amusing diversion when they're bored (The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, NCMEC, 2009). Teenagers who engage in sexting may already have been at risk for other issues, such as domestic abuse, living in poverty, having previous issues with academic performance, social life, or emotional stability (Willard, 2007), or not having close and supportive relationships with significant adults (McAdams, 2007).

It's possible that sexting is a new opportunity for adolescents and young people to explore sexuality rather than only being perceived as a risky and unhealthy behavior. According to studies by Akindele-Oscar and Ayodele (2004) and Ogunsanya (2007), much as in the west, Nigerian teenagers are increasingly

engaging in pre-marital sexual practices. On the other hand, this must have caused a very large number of young people to engage in unprotected intercourse regardless of educational and social backgrounds or whether they lived in an urban or rural area (Akindele-Oscar & Ayodele, 2004). Also, "pre-marital activities of today's youth have offered liberty to close closeness of wild romantic explorations during courting," it has been noted (Olusakin, 2007).

Sexting can harm a person's physical and mental health, as well as bring on depressive symptoms and even suicidal thoughts, according to studies. Many research on the frequency of and attitudes of students about sexting have been conducted. In his study, Dauda (2012) purposefully chose 171 undergraduate students from the University of Maiduguri. According to the study, 31% of participants had sent or received explicit messages or photos of themselves in underwear, and 56.1% of the same individuals had gotten such messages or photos from friends they had made online or from people they knew in person. It has been observed by scholars that victims of sexting are likely to develop anxiety, depression, or other mental health issues. The role and place of the counsellor could be a safe, and confidential while navigating issues.

Counselors always maintain the lead in providing therapy as well as preventing occurrence of sexting in schools as their roles cannot be overemphasized. Constant workshops and seminars on healthy behaviour can help solve sexting problems. McEachern (2012) posited that sexting awareness can be fused into the comprehensive school guidance curriculum and provided through guidance paths, psycho-educational arrangement, and school-wide assemblies. This way, sexting among juveniles and in-school adolescents who are bent on experimentation could be avoided or reduced to the barest minimum.

Again, Ojih (2013) investigated at sexual behaviour on social networking sites among students at a few educational institutions in Kogi State. According to his research, social networking websites influence students' sexual behaviour. Nonetheless, there are still unsolved questions about sexting behaviour and its impact



on college students. Since Nigeria has a wide socio-cultural background, it is anticipated that this study could provide a solid platform for understanding how undergraduates' sexting behaviours relate to academic achievement.

Research Questions

- 1 What is the disposition of College of Education students to sexting in Kwara State?
- 2 What is the disposition of College of Education students to sexting in Kwara State based on gender?

Research Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the disposition of students to sexting behaviour on the basis of gender.

Methodology

This study covered the disposition of students to sexting in Colleges of Education in Kwara State. The population for this study were the students in Colleges of Education in kwara state while the sample were all 200 level students in colleges of education. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 100 students each from Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin and College of Education, Oro. There are three public Colleges of Education in Kwara State; Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin, Kwara State College of Education, Oro and Kwara State College of Education (Technical), Lafiagi.

The instrument of the study was a well-structured questionnaire. It was a researcher designed questionnaire and it was face and content validated by two experts in Social Studies in the Department of Social Sciences Education, University of Ilorin. The corrections were effected and it resulted in the final draft of the instrument. To carry out the reliability, test retest was employed with an interval of two weeks. Respondents outside the sampled pool were used and a co-efficient of 0.62 was yielded. The questionnaire was administered to generate data which was used to determine the disposition of students towards sexting in Colleges of Education in Kwara State. Frequency counts and percentages was used to describe the demography of the respondents. Percentage was

used to analyze the research questions generated while t-test was used to test the hypothesis.

Results

Table 1: Gender Distribution of the Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Gender		
Male	68	34.0
Female	132	66.0
Total	200	100.0

Results in Table 1 indicated that 200 students participated in the study out of which 34% were males while 66% were females.

Table 2: Age Distribution of the Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Age Range		
18-22	129	64.5
23-27	61	30.5
28 +	10	5.0
Total	200	100.0

Also, 64.5% were within 18-22 years of age, 30.5% were within 23-27 years of age, and 5% were 28 years and above. 100 students were from Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin and 100 were from Kwara State College of Education, Oro.

Answering of Research Questions

Research Question 1: What is the disposition of college of education students to sexting in Kwara?

Table 3: Disposition of Students to Sexting

Sexting	Cutoff Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Positive	1-25	73	36.5
Negative	26-40	127	63.5
Total		200	100.0

To answer the research question, responses of students in colleges of education disposition to sexting were summed and subjected to percentage analysis. The instrument contained 10 items that measured disposition to sexting. These items are rated on scale of Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1). Since the test contains 10 items, the



maximum score was calculated as $4 \times 10 = 40$ points while the least point was calculated as $1 \times 10 = 10$ points. The highest score was subtracted from the lowest score $40 - 10 = 30$, and $30/2 = 15$. The result (15) was subtracted from highest score 40 to get 25 which was average. Therefore, students who score from 1 to 25 were considered as having good disposition to sexting while those who score 26 to 40 were considered as having bad disposition to sexting. The result is presented in Table 4.

Hypothesis Testing

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the disposition of students to sexting on the basis of gender.

Table 4: Independent t-test on Difference in the Sexting Behaviour of Students based on Gender

Gender	No	Mean	Std.	df	t-cal.	p-value	Remark
Male	068	15.46	6.62	274	0.42	0.62	Significant
Female	132	15.12	6.61				

Results in Table 4 show a calculated t-value of 0.42 and p-value of 0.62, and the p-value is greater than 0.05 ($0.62 > 0.05$). Since 0.62 is greater than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This means that there is no significant difference in the sexting behaviour of College of Education students based on gender.

Discussion of the Findings

The study examined disposition of students towards sexting. The finding of the study showed that disposition of students in Colleges of Education to sexting was negative. This meant that majority of the sampled students had negative disposition towards sexting, and therefore may likely not engage in the behaviours. This result is in consonance with the findings of Mitchellet al. (2011) who found that student' attitude towards sexting behaviour was negative. This means that the sampled students had low tendency of engaging in sexting behaviours. Lim et al (2016) finding demonstrated that more permissive attitudes to sexting were associated with being male, lower sexual health knowledge, inconsistent condom use with casual partners, and higher alcohol

consumption. In the finding of this study, gender was not a factor as against other studies. The finding of this study is at variance with Balogun et al (2019) when they averred that sexting behaviour is prevalent among undergraduates and low self-esteem and peer association are significant determinants. This study did not focus on psychology of the students and also not on undergraduates but College of Education students.

Many Colleges of Education students do not engage in the act in opposition to undergraduates as discovered by Balogun et al (2019). Dodaj et al (2022) study on across-cultural examination of the sexting motives and attitudes: Bosnia and Herzegovina vs. Croatia revealed gender to be predictive of instrumental sexting motives in the Croatian sample and body image reinforcement sexting motives in the Bosnia and Herzegovina sample. Cucci et al (2023) also found that adolescents who reported a more favourable attitude toward sexting were more likely to engage in sexting and parents role cannot be over-emphasize. This study affirms the finding of this study on one hand and disagrees on the other hand with a caveat of prediction.

York et al (2021) researching on attitudes to sexting amongst post-primary pupils in Northern Ireland: a liberal feminist approach came to the conclusion that young people in their study regard sexting as normal behaviour and report that it is more likely to be boys who pressure girls for a picture. Finding of this present study is in disagreement with many earlier studies. Confalonieriet al (2020) in a study on Italian adolescents found out 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. The finding of this study is against that of Confalonieret al (2020). The finding of this study did not see gender as a factor predisposing students to sexting behaviour.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made.

1. The students should be orientated on the need to maintain current disposition towards sexting which was found to be negative



- especially by counsellors.
- Students in Colleges of Education should periodically be sensitized on the consequences of sexting and the need to avoid sexting related behaviours. If this is done, it will help sustain the observed prevalence of sexting which was low.
 - School counselors should incorporate counseling tips in school curriculum to guide adolescents on proper behaviour.

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