

SEXTING BEHAVIOUR AMONG TEENAGERS IN LAGOS ISLAND: IMPERATIVE FOR THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTIONS

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Abstract

Recent studies show that sexting is becoming a deviant behaviour among Nigerian teenagers yet the factors associated with sexting behaviour remains poorly understood. Therefore, this study investigated the relationship between parental bonding and body image on sexting behaviour among teenagers randomly drawn from business centres, shopping malls, and eateries located in Lagos Island. Correlational survey design was adopted for the study. One thousand three hundred and thirty-four teenagers consisting 650 males (48.7 %) 684 females (51.3%) with age range of 10 - 19 years and mean age of 14.5 years participated in the study. Three instruments, used for data collection were Sex and Tech questionnaire ($r=.68$); Parker Parental Bonding Instrument ($r=.71$) and Cash Appearance Schemas Inventory ($r=.73$). Results show that 30.8 % of the surveyed teenagers have either sent or received sexually suggestive content via E-mail, IM, text, and Skype while 27.1 % have exchanged sexy personal messages/pictures/videos. Four hundred and seventy-one respondents (35.3%) stated that the major motivation for sexting was “sexy” presents to boy friends/girl friends. Further, there was perfect negative relationship between parental bonding and sexting behaviour ($r=-.704$, $p<0.05$) and a moderate inverse relationship between body image and sexting behaviour ($r= -.444$, $p<.05$). The outcomes of this study suggest the need for parents, Counselling Psychologists and other stakeholders to educate teenagers on the detrimental consequences that could arise from sexting. Parents and guardians should also monitor phone usage to ensure internet safety as well as support teenagers to build positive attitude towards their bodies.

Key words: Sexting, Teenagers, Parental Bonding, Body Image

Introduction

One of the biggest problems facing Nigeria today is the increasing rate at which young people exchange sexually explicit message, picture, or video. A concern is that sexting belongs to a constellation of behaviours that are considered risky. In addition to the widely acknowledged traditional developmental challenges involved in growing up, Information and

Communication Technology (ICT) is changing the way teenagers live and socially interact. Unlike teenagers of previous decades, today's teenagers live in a world of communication and media overload. Scholars are of the opinion that technological development has contributed significantly to increase in risky sexual behaviours as well as moral decadence among Nigerian teenagers (Ofule &

Ezeokoli, 2015; Enechojo, Egbe-Okpenge & Awopetu, 2013). The misuse of ICT by teenagers is not surprising because it is a phase of life when they become more independent and explore various life possibilities. This is in addition to struggling with "identity exploration, instability, self-focus, and feeling in-between" (Bacchini, Angelis & Fanara, 2017). Various reasons have been adduced for sexting among teenagers. For example, curiosity as to what others look like naked as well as being easily aroused by nudity (Hudson, Fetro & Ogletree, 2014); peer pressure (Makgale & Plattner, 2017) and immaturity of the prefrontal cortex of the brain which is responsible for decision making (Giedd, Blumenthal, Jeffries, Castellanos, Liu, Zijdenbos, Paus, Evans & Rapopor, 1999). Despite the widely reported benefits of ICT, research has shown that it can be quite detrimental to health and well-being of teenagers as a result of unguarded usage such as sending and receiving nude pictures (sexting). The rate at which adolescents exchange nude or semi-nude pictures of themselves or friends using ICT tools is one misuse of ICT which has attracted considerable attention of parents, professionals, counselling psychologists, educators, researchers and law enforcement officers due to its numerous possible negative consequences associated with it. Studies (Jonsson, Svedin, & Hydén, 2014; Temple & Choi, 2014; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2014) define sexting as the use of digital devices such as computers and mobile phones to create and exchange messages and images of a sexual nature. The enormity of this practice has been captured by scholars. For instance, Amoo, Adetoro and Olawale (2013) found that users of social media by age gap 10-14 years are 4.614 are more likely to be exposed to sexual activity.

Similarly, Akanni (2014) and Olatunde and Balogun, (2017) reported that of five hundred and seventy-five participants age between 14–24 years, twenty percent had sent sexts, while 33.2% had received sexts. Drouin, Coupe, Jeff and Temple (2017) found that sixty-two percent out of 352 respondents from Indiana had sent or received a sexually-explicit picture message. There are two main schools of thoughts concerning sexting. One of such schools is that sexting is a normal, harmless and healthy development of an independent identity as well as an aspect of sexual expression and relationships (Ferguson, 2011; Doring, 2014; Cooper, Quayle, Jonsson & Svedin, 2016). The proponents argue that sexting has the capacity to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections by giving adolescents a way to vent sexual impulses without acting on them (Julia, Lippman & Campbell, 2014; Gordon-Messer, Bauermeister, Grodzinski & Zimmerman, 2013).

Another school of thought which this study is inclined to is the assumption that sexting is inherently risky and a deviant behaviour in need of intervention and prevention (Van Ouytsel, Van Gool, Ponnet & Walrave, 2014). This perspective is a very predominant interpretation of sexting in Nigeria and it dominates the sexting literature. That argument is in line with the Social-Psychological Problem Behaviour Theory of Jessor (1987) which offers a compelling explanation why sexting is considered a risky sexual behaviour. According to Jessor (1987), sexting is a problem behaviour because it deviates from both social and legal norms or behaviour that is socially approved and those of authority and tends to "elicit some form of social control response whether mild reproof, social rejection or incarceration".

This view point of negative consequences of sexting is gaining attention in literature. For example, some studies have reported a significant relationship between sexting and risky sexual practices, such as multiple sexual partnership (e.g., Dir, Cyders, & Coskunpinar, 2013; Crimmins & Seigfried-Spellar, 2017; Yeung, et al., 2014). Young people who engaged in sexting behaviour were also reported to have begun dating and to have had sex than those who did not sext (Jeff & HyeJeong, 2014; Benotsch, Snipes, Martin, & Bull, 2013). It is also documented that youth who sext has an increased likelihood of being victimized online in other ways (e.g., interpersonal relationship violence, and cyber bullying) especially female internet users. Reyns, Burek, Henson and Fisher (2011) have found that victimization can result in psychological distress, such as depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts. Studies (Crimmins, et al., 2014; Benotsch, et al, 2013) also reported that teenagers who sext are more likely to have unprotected sex. Scholars (Dir, et al., 2013; Temple, Le, van den Berg, Ling & Paul, 2014) posited that sexters will likely use drugs or alcohol and abuse substances before sex. On the contrary, some studies, did not find a relationship between sexting and sexual risky behaviours (Currin, Hubach, Sanders & Hammer, 2016; Gordon-Messer *et al.*, 2013). Though there is disagreement concerning the consequences of sexting among scholars but there a consensus that teenagers may jeopardize future opportunities by putting compromising, ineffaceable images online that could be available to potential employers, academic institutions, and family members (Lithwick 2017: Klepper, 2011). There are ample of studies (Crimmins et al, 2014; Yeung, et al., 2014; Doring, 2014; Cooper, et al. 2016) which have succeeded

in bringing to limelight the concept of sexting. However, these studies have some methodological shortcomings. Some of these limitations include: (1) they were conducted using predominantly early adolescents and this age group is not representative for teen populations; (2) acceptance of sexting behaviour and its conceptualization vary from culture to culture. For instance, in Western world, sexting is regarded unproblematic while in Nigeria, it is seen as a high-risk sexualized media behaviour which deviates from cultural norms; (3) most studies on sexting in Nigeria (eg Nwabueze, OkoLi, Onuigbo, & Chukwu 2015; Olatunde & Balogun, 2017) were interested in its prevalence and consequences. Other categories of studies on sexting were on legal issues concerning young people who received, stored and disseminated nude pictures of themselves or another teen who faced criminal charges including child pornography (Diamond, Jozifkova & Weiss, 2010; Wolak, Finkelhor, & Mitchell, 2012). There is paucity of empirical literature that provided insights into prevalence and motivation for sexting. Such information would be useful to Counselling Psychologists, Social Workers, Health Promoters and Policy-makers in designing intervention and prevention for teenagers.

Parenting constructs such as warmth, psychological control, communication, and monitoring have been found to be influential in the development of adolescent sexual behaviour (Ofole & Agokei, 2014; Kerpelman, McElwain, Pittman & Adler-Baeder, 2013; Kan, Cheng, Landale, & McHale, 2010). These constructs are reflected in parents-child relationship. Parents-child relationship has four major components, namely; parental attachment also known as bonding, monitoring,

communication and involvement. Bonding is the process of developing a close, interpersonal relationship. Bonding most commonly takes place between family members or friends (Maximilian, 2012). According to Hirschi's (1969) Social Bonding Theory, when bonds between individual and their parents are broken, such individual can resort to unusual behaviour which is normally not accepted by the society. Findings of Higgins, Jennings and Mahoney (2010) supported this line of argument that when parental bonding decreases, the probability of adolescents committing delinquencies increased. Strohschein and Mathew (2014) stated that teenagers who are bonded with parents are less likely to be troubled, aggressive or experience emotional and behavioural problems. There is preliminary evidence by Steven Sek-yum Nga (2015), showing that parental bonding has either significant positive or negative effects on people's character strengths in the areas of authenticity, love, social intelligence and self-regulation. Regrettably, not much is known concerning parental bonding and sexting behaviour among teenagers in Nigeria.

Another factor which has the likelihood of an association with sexting behaviour is self image. National Eating Disorders Association (2017) posited that body image is a person's perception of the aesthetics or sexual attractiveness of his/her own body. According to Bahadur (2014), body image incorporates the memories, experiences, assumptions, and comparisons of one's own appearance, and overall attitudes towards his/her height, shape, and weight. Body image can be positive or negative. Negative body image consists of a disoriented view of one's shape; whereby individuals feel self-conscious or feel ashamed, and assume

others are more attractive (Pierce, 2017). Individuals with negative self image have been reported to have low self-esteem which fixates. Long-term fixation could lead to higher risks of isolation, and mental illnesses (National Eating Disorders Association, 2017). Positive body image on the other hand, is described as a clear true perception of one's figure. There is preliminary evidence that teenagers who are susceptible to body dissatisfaction can be at risk of sexting because of the belief that sexting has the likelihood to raise self-esteem (D'Antona, Kevorkian & Russom, 2010).

Research Questions

1. What is the prevalence of sexting behaviours in the past one month among the teenagers in Lagos Island?
2. What are the reasons(s) or motivation for sending/posting/receiving/sharing sexually suggestive messages, nude/semi-nude pictures or videos or both among teenagers in Lagos Island?
3. What relationship exists between the independent variables (parental bonding and body image) and sexting behaviours among teenagers in Lagos Island?

Methodology

The correlational research design was adopted for this study. Simple random sampling technique was utilized to draw a sample size of 1334 consisting 650 males (48.7 %) 684 females (51.3%) with age range of between 10-19 years and mean age of 14.5 years from the target population of teenagers in Lagos Island. The respondents were randomly selected from eateries, fashion houses, shopping malls and business centres. Lagos Island was purposively

selected to enable the researcher to get adequate sample size that would meet the study inclusion criteria. The major eligibility criteria is possession of computer (non-laptop, laptop computer, Cellphone, smartphone, Blackberry etc.), digital camera, digital camcorder (video recorder) mP3 Player (like iPod) video mP3 Player and webcam. Respondents were individually approached in those locations by the researcher and three research assistants (2 female and 1 male). Data were collected from February 2017 to June, 2017. Of the 2110 questionnaires produced, only 1334 were properly completely filled. The return rate of 63.2 % was, therefore, considered as satisfactory for a correlational study.

Instruments

These three instruments were utilized to collect data for this study. The instrument was serialized into section A-D. Section A obtained demographic data of the respondents while section B-D sought information concerning the variables of the study. Details of the questionnaires are presented below.

Sex and Tech questionnaire

Sex and Tech questionnaire developed by The National Campaign (2017) was adapted to measure the sexting behaviour (dependent variable). The original scale was 101 items self report questionnaire on sexting behaviour. For the purpose of this study, two subscales were used to assess sexting behaviour and motivation for participating in sexting. The sub scale on motivation asked students to mark the reason why they send/post sexually suggestive messages, nude/semi-nude pictures or videos, or both for each question. Representative item on this sub scale include; *to get a guy/girl's attention*; *to initiate sexual behaviour with the recipient* 'To enhance my relationship'. The second sub scale used was

to elicit information on the involvement in sexting within the past 30 days. Example of items include; *posted a sexy personal message/picture/video to someone's online profile or private message (like on MySpace, Facebook, etc in the last one month.* Martinez-Prather and Vandiver (2014) and Wolak, Finkelhor and Mitchell (2012) who used the scale reported that the instrument has satisfactory psychometric properties. For the purpose of this study, the reliability index of $r=.68$ was obtained using test-rest method.

Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI) developed by Parker, Tupling and Brown (1979) was adopted to assess the bonding of respondents with parent(s). It was originally developed to measure two attributes of parenting behaviour namely; care and overprotection. There were 13 items in the control/overprotection dimension (scores range between 0 and 39) and high scores indicated the perception of over-protective parenting. It was a 4 point Likert-type rating scale (very like 3 to very unlike 0). The individual made two different ratings, one each for his/her mother and father. In the scoring of the care, subscale had 12 items 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 18, 24. The protection subscale had 13 items, namely; 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 15, 19, 20, 21, 22. For scoring purposes, the subscale was reversely coded. (0-3). High scores in the care dimension and low scores in the over-protection/control dimension represented positively perceived parental bonding. Psychometrics properties of PBI were documented as satisfactory by Suzuki and Kitamura (2011). For the purpose of this study, a reliability index of $r=.71$ was obtained after testing and re-testing it on a randomly selected teenagers from Oyo State.

Self image measure: The Appearance Schemas Inventory (ASI) by Cash (2003)

was adopted to assess the students' self image. It was a 14-item tool developed by Cash and Labarge (1996) but the amended version which has a longer, 20-item version was used for this study. The instrument consisted of two subscales namely; Self-Evaluative Salience (12 items) and Motivational Salience (8 items). Self-Evaluative Salience reflected the extent to which individuals defined or measured themselves and their self-worth by their physical appearance which they deemed influential in their social and emotional experiences. Motivational Salience pertains to the extent to which persons attend to their appearance and engage in appearance-management behaviour. Typical items on the scale include; *"My appearance is responsible for much of what's happened to me in my life"* and *"If I dislike how I look on a given day, it's hard to feel happy about other things."* Respondents rated items on a

5-point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree. The ASI-R has been found to have good psychometric properties (Cash, Melnyk & Hrabosky, 2004). In order to make it culturally fair, the instrument was pilot tested on a randomly selected teenagers from Oyo state and reliability index of $r=.73$ was obtained which was considered satisfactory for a study of this nature.

Descriptive statistic was used to calculate the mean, age range and percentages while Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to investigate if there is relationship between the independent variables and sexting behaviour.

Results

Research Question one: What is the prevalence of sexting behaviours in the past one month among the teenagers in Lagos Island?

The result of this research question analyzed with descriptive statistics is presented on Table 1
Table 1: Prevalence of Sexting Behaviour within the past one month among the teenagers in Lagos Island in the last one month

	Sexy Message	Sexy Picture or Video	Both	Neither
Sent a sexy personal message/ picture/video to someone (via email, IM, text, Skype, etc)	525 (39.4%)	104 (7.8%)	411 (30.8)	294 (22%)
Posted a sexy personal message/picture/video to someone's online profile or private message (like on MySpace, Facebook, etc)	342 (26.6%)	247 (18.5%)	317 (23.8%)	428 (32.1%)
Internet sent/ posted a sexy personal message/picture/video	212 (15.9%)	219 (16.4%)	355 (26.6%)	548 (41%)
Received a sexy personal message/picture/video from someone (via email, IM, text, Skype etc)	421 (31.6)	337 (25.3%)	361 (27.1%)	215 (16.1%)
Shared a sexy message/picture/video with someone other than the one(s) it was originally meant for	369 (27.7%)	229 (17.2%)	248 (18.6%)	488 (36.6)
Had a sexy message/picture/video (originally meant to be private) shared with me	412 (30.9%)	204 (15.3%)	212 (15.9%)	506 (37.9%)
Asked someone to send a personal sexy message/picture/video to you	423 (32%)	380 (28.5%)	204 (15.3%)	327 (24.5%)

Table 1 shows that of the 1334 respondents, 411 representing, 30.8% of the sample said that within the last one month they have sent sexy personal messages/pictures/videos to someone through email, IM, text, Skype, while 317 (23.8%) respondents had posted sexy personal messages/pictures/videos to someone's online profile or private message (like on MySpace, Facebook, etc). Similarly, 355 teenagers (26.6%) had posted sexy personal messages/pictures/videos through the internet. The table also shows that three hundred and sixty-one teenagers (27.1%) reported to have received sexy personal messages/pictures/videos from someone (via email, IM, text, Skype etc). In response to the question whether they have shared sexy messages/pictures/videos with someone other than the one(s) it was originally meant for, only minority 248 (18.6 %) out of the sample said they have. Two hundred and twelve (15.9%) have had sexy messages/pictures/videos (originally meant to be private) shared with someone. Conclusively, two hundred and four teenagers representing (15.3%) of the sampled 1334 have asked someone to send personal sexy messages/pictures/videos to them. The implication of this result is that majority of teens have access to cellular which encourages sexting. This high

prevalence emphasized the urgent need for prevention and intervention.

This result corroborates several studies (Strasberg, McKinnon, Sustaíta & Rullo, 2013; Klettke, Hallford & Mellor, 2014; Campbell & Park, 2014) who reported high prevalence of sexting among adolescents from different background and setting. One probably reason for this finding could be due to the increase in availability and usage of android and smart phones among young people in Nigeria. It is also possible that sexting is a modified form of the longstanding practice of photo sharing in romantic and sexual relationships (Chalfen, 2009). It may also be in reflection of the increase in social anxiety among teenagers who may prefer texting to voice calls as a medium for intimate contact and may also prefer sexting as a medium for sexual contact (Reid, 2007; Katzman, 2010).

Question Two: What are the reasons(s) or motivation for sending/posting/receiving/sharing sexually suggestive messages, nude/semi-nude pictures or videos or both among teenagers in Lagos Island?

This question was analysed with simple percentage. The result is presented on Table 2

Table 2: Item by item of them motivation for sending/posting/receiving/sharing sexually suggestive messages, nude/semi-nude pictures or videos or both

		Sexy Message	Sexy Picture or Video	Both	Neither	Rank order
1	To get a guy/girl's attention	525 (39.4%)	216 (16.2%)	311 (23.3%)	282 (21.1%)	4 th
2	To initiate sexual behaviour with the recipient	112 (8.4%)	142 (10.6%)	376 (28.2%)	704 (52.8%)	3 rd
3	As a "sexy" present to a boyfriend/girlfriend	348 (26.1%)	116 (8.7%)	471 (35.3%)	399 (29.9%)	1 st
4	To feel sexy	322 (24.1%)	232 (17.4%)	295 (22.1%)	485 (36.4%)	5 th
5	As a joke	410 (30.7%)	201 (15.1%)	420 (31.5%)	303 (22.7%)	2 nd
6	To be fun/flirtatious	392 (29.4)	161 (12.1%)	280 (21%)	501 (37.6%)	6 th
7	In response to one that was sent to me	383 (28.7%)	256 (19.2%)	265 (19.9%)	430 (32.2%)	7 th
8	To enhance my relationship	436 (32.7%)	257 (19.3%)	217 (16.3%)	424 (31.8%)	8 th
9	Because I was pressured	204 (15.3%)	112 (8.4%)	178 (13.3%)	840 (62.9%)	10 th
10	By force or blackmail	193 (14.5%)	249 (18.7%)	198 (14.8%)	694 (52%)	9 th

Table 2 shows the motivation for sexting ranked according to the responses. The majority of the teenagers 471(35.3%) said they sent sexually suggestive content messages, videos and pictures as a "sexy" present to boyfriends/girlfriends. Four Hundred and twenty (31.5%) reported sharing or posting a sexy personal message/picture/video as "a joke". Out of the 1334 sampled teenagers 376(28.2%) reported they exchanged sexy personal message/picture/video to initiate sexual behaviour with the recipient. Three hundred and eleven teenagers representing 23.3% of the sample said they sent a sexy personal message/picture/video in order to get a guy/girl's attention. In addition, two hundred

and ninety-five (22.1%) students responded that sexting makes them "feel sexy". Four hundred and forty-four (23%) students considered sexting as a joke, while two hundred and eighty (21%) responded that they sent sexy messages as a way of having fun or being flirtatious. Of the 1334 teenagers 265(19.9%) said they sent in response to ones that were sent to them. Two hundred and seventeen ((16.3%) teenagers reported that they sent/posted sexually explicit messages/videos in order to enhance their relationship. As a result of peer pressure, one hundred and ninety -eight representing 14.8% of the sample said that they posted /shared and received sexy personal messages/pictures/videos to

someone's online profile or private because they were coerced or blackmailed. The motivation for sexting among minority of respondents was because they were pressured (13.3%). The implication of this result is that texting is becoming an acceptable way for teens to communicate and express themselves as a means of socializing.

The outcome of this second research question is in tandem with findings of Drouin and Tobin (2014) as well as Hoder (2014) who reported that flirtation, foreplay and intimacy was the main motivation behind sexting among their respondents. The finding is not surprising if the interpretation is done in line with uses and gratifications theory of Katz, Elihu, Jay and Blumler (1974) which suggested that people's needs and desires lead to using phones and internets. The theory assumes that (a) media behaviour is purposive, goal-directed and motivated; (b) people select media content to satisfy their needs or desires; (c) social and psychological dispositions mediate that behaviour; and, (d) "media compete with other forms of communication or functional alternatives — such as interpersonal interaction for selection, attention and use". The second and third motivation reported in this study was in order to initiate sexual behaviour and to get a guy/girl's attention. These findings are in agreement with Roche, Epstein-Ngo Carter, Konrath, Walton,

Zimmerman and Cunningham (2015) who found that 56.6% African American youth aged 14-20 years sent sexually explicit messages to receive peer acceptance. This is also in tandem with previous studies (Drouin & Tobin, 2014; Hoder, 2014; Lee & Crofts, 2015; Roche, et al., 2015) who reported that sexting was associated with perceived peer approval of sexting. Finally, minority of respondents (13.3%) said that the motivation for sending/ sharing/exchanging sexually explicit pictures, messages, and videos is because they were pressurized by peers or to prevent blackmail. This outcome supports previous findings (Hasinoff, 2013; Harvey Gill & Livingstone, 2013; Van Ouytsel et al., 2016) who reported that the respondents in their study engaged in sexting due to pressure of fear of losing their boyfriends. This outcome could probably be as a result existence of **gendered double standards** surrounding sexting behaviour (Lee & Crofts, 2015). Gendered double standards suggest a general gendered disparity in motivations for engaging in sexting.

Research Question Three: What relationship exists between the independent variables (parental bonding and body image) and sexting behaviour among teenagers in Lagos Island?

Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to analyze this research question.

Table 3: Correlation matrix showing the relationship among teenagers' self image, parental bonding and sexting behaviour

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev	1	2	3
Sexting Behaviour	63.32	19.11	1.000		
Parental bonding	49.33	12.42	-.510*	-.704*	1.000
Self Image	47.81	13.16	-.444**	1.000	

**Correlation is significant at 0.01(2-tailed)

Table 3 shows the relationship between the independent variables (parental bonding and self image) and the dependent variable (sexting behaviour). It is evident that sexting behaviour negatively correlate with parental bonding ($r = -.704$, $P < 0.05$) and self image ($r = -.444$, $P < 0.05$). The direction between the independent and depend variables were inverse. This implies that parental bonding and self image change in opposite directions with sexting behaviour. This result suggests that an increase in parental bonding will definitely lead to a decrease in teenagers' sexting behaviour. Similarly, an increase in self image will likely reduce sexting behaviour among the teenagers.

This finding corroborates recent studies (Bleakley, Ellithorpe & Romer, 2016; Chin-Jang & Ryu, 2016) who reported that parental monitoring of children internet usage reduced problematic behaviours. This finding could be better explained, using Bowlby's (1982) attachments theory which argued that when children are well bonded with their parents as caregivers in their early formative years, it shapes their underlying patterns of thought, feelings and motivations in adulthood. Teenagers who have bonded relationships with parents are also likely to have a good psychological well-being, higher self-esteem, lower anxiety and depression, and lesser inclinations towards delinquency and deviant behaviours (Steinberg, 2001). Another possible reason for this finding is provided by Drouin and Langraff (2012). They opined that teenagers engage in sexting for two reasons; (1); as a hyperactivating strategy to compulsively seek proximity and protection from parents or as a deactivating strategy in order to meet their sexual needs.

Another predictable finding of this study is that there is inverse relationship between

self-image and sexting behaviour. This outcome corroborates that of Gordon-Messer, Bauermeister, Grodzinski and Zimmermann (2013) as well as Mitchell (2014) who found that self-image influences an individual's views on sex and sexuality and can contribute to problems of sexuality and sex in young adults if it is negative. Similarly, Ybarra and Mitchell (2014) found that people with high self-esteem and positive self image rarely sext. Scholes-Balog, Francke and Hemphill (2016) corroborated the fact that high self-esteem is protective against sending photos or videos.

Implications of the Finding

The first major practical contribution of the present research is that it provided much needed empirical data on the actual prevalence of sexting among teenagers. The valuable data have practical implications for the design of sexuality education for teenagers in Lagos state. The sexuality education should be tailored towards the social, educational and career consequences of sexting. This research also has contributed theoretically by supporting the existing body of knowledge on the impact of parent-child relationship. The outcome has implication for future research, especially, in instituting an experimental study in order to remediate sexting behaviour among teenagers. More research will be necessary to refine and further elaborate these novel findings.

Conclusion

The outcome of this study laid credence to the fact that prevalence of sexting among teenagers is on the increase and represents high-risk sexualized media behaviour requiring urgent attention. It also provided insight into the motivation for sexting as well as the factors that are associated with

sexting. This understanding is thus critical for parents, teachers, counselling psychologists, social workers, police, programme designers and many other stakeholders who work with teenagers.

Recommendations

The results from this study highlights the need for sexual education programmes for teenagers to be expanded to include digital sex, since sexting and sexual interaction on social media are absent from the current sex education programmes and curriculum. In addition, counselling psychologists, health workers, and other stakeholders should organize programmes that would assist in enhancing complete sexting abstinence as well as setting sexting "rules," "etiquette," "safety," and "ethics". Parents should assume full responsibility for the sexual education and development of their teenagers by monitoring and supervising their children internet/phone usage in order to prevent any problematic usage. They should bond more with their children in order to give them in road towards discussing the potential consequences of sending or receiving sexual messaging.

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