

Sexual Subjectivity, Peer Pressure, and Partner Coercion on Perceived Sexting Consequences Among Adolescent Girls

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BACKGROUND: Adolescent girls report more negative sexting experiences than boys¹. However, little is known about the psychological/social influences and motivations for sexting associated with perceived positive and negative sexting consequences among girls.

The aim of this study was to test the hypotheses that:

- Girls with higher sexual subjectivity (entitlement to/efficacy achieving sexual pleasure and sexual body-esteem) who sext for sexual/romantic reasons will perceive higher positive consequences and lower negative consequences.
- Girls with lower sexual subjectivity, high vulnerability to peer pressure, who sext for body-image reinforcement, in response to coercion, will perceive higher negative consequences and lower positive consequences.

METHODS

- Procedure:** Online survey of 200 cisgender girls, 14-18 y/o, attracted to males, who had sexted in past year (US sample). Waiver of guardian permission.
- Participants:** Mean age = 16.32 (1.20); 35% Black, 53% White, 24.5% Hispanic/Latina, 12.5% Asian, AI/AN, or Native Hawaiian/PI
- Measures: Individual Characteristics:** Sexual Subjectivity², Vulnerability to Peer Pressure³; **Motivations:** Sexting for Sexual/Romantic Reasons⁴, Sexting for Body-Image Reinforcement⁴, Sexting in Response to Coercion⁵; **Outcomes:** Positive Sexting Consequences⁶ (e.g., strengthened relationship, body acceptance), Negative Sexting Consequences⁶ (e.g., feeling ashamed/exploited, image shared without consent); **Related sexting behaviors:** sexting frequency, number of boys sexted, sexting outside a relationship, sexual experience with sexting recipient, sexting while using drugs/alcohol.

RESULTS:

- High **sexual subjectivity** and **sexting for sexual/romantic reasons** accounted for significant variance in **positive sexting consequences**, holding other variables constant.
- Low **sexual subjectivity**, **vulnerability to peer pressure**, **sexting in response to partner coercion**, and **number of different boys sexted** accounted for significant variance in **negative sexting consequences**, holding other variables constant.
- Most commonly endorsed positive sexting consequences:** "I found sexting sexually arousing" (75.5%), "I've become emotionally closer the boy I sexted" (67.5%), "I've become more accepting of my body because of sexting" (58.5%).
- Most commonly endorsed negative sexting consequences:** "I felt ashamed because of sexting" (46.0%), "I've had problems with the boys I've sexted" (45.0%), "I've become more self-conscious about my body because of sexting" (33.5%).

Girls with lower **sexual subjectivity**, who are vulnerable to peer pressure, and sexted in response to partner **coercion** perceive greater **negative sexting consequences**.

Girls with higher **sexual subjectivity** who sexted for **sexual/romantic reasons** perceive greater **positive sexting consequences**.

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RESULTS CONTINUED:

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Sexual subjectivity	-								
2. Vulnerability to peer pressure	-.12	-							
3. Sexting for sexual/romantic reasons	.19**	.21**	-						
4. Sexting for body-image reinforcement	-.16*	.40***	.42***	-					
5. Sexting in response to coercion	.01	.42***	.26***	.50***	-				
6. Positive sexting consequences	.31***	.10	.51***	.18*	.14	-			
7. Negative sexting consequences	-.15*	.47***	.21**	.46***	.65***	.02	-		
8. Sexting frequency past 12-months	.27***	.16*	.33***	.17*	.14*	.25***	.14	-	
9. Number of different boys/men sexted	.09	.25***	.27***	.31***	.27***	-.00	.39***	.32***	-
10. Sexting while using alcohol/drugs	.11	.37***	.20**	.21**	.44***	.08	.30***	.26***	.24**

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

Multiple Regression Analyses	Positive Consequences	Negative Consequences
Variable	B	B
12-month sexting frequency	0.06	
Sexual intercourse with recipient	-0.03	0.01
Number of different boys sexted		0.22***
Sexting while using alcohol/drugs		-0.07
Sexting outside of a relationship		0.06
Sexual subjectivity	0.22**	-0.12*
Sexting for sexual/romantic reasons	0.46***	-0.04
Sexting for body-image reinforcement	0.03	0.06
Vulnerability to peer pressure		0.16**
Sexting in response to partner coercion		0.51***
R ²	0.32	0.55
df	(5, 192)	(9, 166)
F	15.12***	20.21***

DISCUSSION:

- This study contributes to our understanding of the factors leading to the positive and negative consequences of sexting among adolescent girls.
- Individual strengths and vulnerabilities as well as motivations for sexting contribute in diverse ways to positive and negative consequences.
- Safe-sexting interventions should aim to increase girls' agentic decision-making and decrease peer and partner pressure.

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