

Personality Traits, Self-Control, and Sexting Attitudes Among Young Adults

**Hareem Hassan, Kainat Tariq, Mamoona Nasir,
and Sumaira Ayub**

University of Management and Technology

The present study investigated the relationship between personality traits, self-control, and sexting attitudes in young adults. Convenient sample of 254 young adults with an age range of 18-30 years ($M = 22.28$, $SD = 2.70$) were taken from different universities and professional fields in Pakistan. The self-constructed demographic sheet, Brief HEXACO Inventory (de Vries, 2013), Brief Self-Control Scale (Tangney et al., 2004), and Sexting Attitude Scale (Weiskkerch & Delevi, 2011) were used to assess the study variables. The results revealed that honesty-humility and self-control had a negative relationship with fun and carefree aspect of sexting attitude in young adults. Moreover, honesty-humility, conscientiousness and self-control had a positive, whereas emotionality had a negative relationship with perceived risk aspect of sexting attitude in young adults. Furthermore, honesty-humility and self-control also had a negative relationship with relational expectations aspect of sexting attitude. Results also indicated that self-control negatively predicted fun and carefree and positively predicted perceived risk domains of sexting attitudes; while, honesty-humility negatively predicted relational expectations in young adults. Results showed significant differences in working and non-working young adults in terms of personality traits, self-control, and sexting attitudes. The study providing an in-depth understanding of the widespread phenomenon of sexting highlighting some of the major mental health concerns associated with the sexting behavior among youth.

Keywords: Sexting attitudes, personality traits, self-control

In today's time almost every individual child has the gadget that they use for diverse purposes like gaming, social media usage or

Hareem Hassan, Kainat Tariq, Mamoona Nasir, and Sumaira Ayub, Department of Applied Psychology, University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Sumaira Ayub, Department of Applied Psychology, University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan. Email: sumaira.ayub@umt.edu.pk

internet surfing. All this can result in higher levels of physical and psychological issues in the youth's lives (Brennan & Bosson, 1998). In 2014, around 1.85 billion people were found to be using mobile phones. The number is likely to increase to 2.87 billion in the year 2020. Students were also found to exhibit relatively poor communication behavior (Cha & Seo, 2018). Furthermore, people who extensively use mobile phones exhibit low self-esteem, high approval motivation, extraversion, and other high self-monitoring behaviors (Takao et al., 2009).

Sexting can be defined as the exchange of sexual material (sexually explicit content) via a technological media (Anwar et al., 2019). It has two types. Primary sexting which is sexting between two individuals only and are not shared any further. Such kind of sexting is indeed consensual (Calvert, 2009; Schmitz & Siry, 2011) and secondary sexting where sexts shared between two mutually consented people are forwarded to other recipients without the consent of the sender. There are several reasons why people indulge in this behavior. Many adolescents, however, reported that they sent sexually explicit images at the request of their partner (Englander, 2019). They also did it so they could remain intimate with their partner when they were apart (Drouin & Landgraff, 2012). People also indulged in sexting because it allowed them to develop their individual sexual identity (Alonso & Romero, 2019). Relieving boredom was another major factor (Kopecký, 2012). In Spanish youth, sexting was also related with cyber gossip and the need of girls to become popular in their peers. In boys, normalization of adult culture and their willingness for sexting were more common factors (Adewuyi & Adefemi, 2016).

As per the reasoned action theory which is an extension to the theory of planned behavior, it is an intention that predicts behavior. It goes on to say that if people evaluate any behavior as positive and if they think that other people in their surroundings or peers want them to perform that specific behavior, their motivation increases and hence the likelihood of them performing the specific function. Similarly, if people perceive sexting as a positive behavior and feel that their partner expects them to indulge in this behavior, then they are more likely to perform it and feel good about it. When it comes to prevalence of sexting among males and females, the researchers have a mixed finding. Some studies claim that girls are more likely to be caught up in this behavior (Ainslie, 1975; Reyns et al., 2014; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2014) other studies find boys to be more engaged in this activity (Gámez-Guadix et al., 2017; West et al., 2014). However, some act on the neutral grounds saying that no gender difference

exists in terms of communicating sexual photos or texts (Campbell & Park, 2014; Lenhart, 2009; Rice et al., 2012; Van-Ouytsel et al., 2015). Exchange of explicit content through mobiles is also gaining popularity in the modern world (Dodaj et al., 2019). A lot of previous studies suggested that personality traits can influence and predict online behaviors (Baiocco et al., 2017). The studies done to assess personality traits and their connection with sexting has found traits like sensation seeking, negative urgency and impulsivity linked to sexting behaviors (Dir et al., 2013; Temple et al., 2014).

Personality is described as a complex pattern of many psychological characteristics that are largely unconscious, deeply embedded in the mind and resistant to any change (Millon & Grossman, 2005). It is also concerned with the patterns of thought, experience and action that will then characterize any individual's construction of his life and environment. Various models explain the sheer diverse personality traits among which the most prominent ones are the Five Factor Model (Goldberg, 1990; McCrae & John, 1992). It includes five major traits that include conscientiousness, agreeableness, openness to experience, extraversion, and neuroticism. Similarly, Eysenck's personality traits which added a third trait psychoticism to the other two popular one's extraversion and neuroticism (Eysenck, 1981). Lastly HEXACO personality traits, this model is extremely like Big Five; however, it varies with the latter in terms of some basic traits. It includes honesty-humility, emotionality, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience (Anderson, 2005).

Sexting is also related to self-control which is the ability to regulate one's desires and emotional needs to conform to the norms of society (Baumeister et al., 2007). This is better explained through the theory of self-control. The theory states that self-control has a lot to do with behaviors that people exhibit. So, people who learn how to exhibit control early in their lives are less likely to be indulged in analogous or unnatural behaviors. The theory also builds on the assumption that people are not inherently bad or immoral. They only act in accordance with the principles of self-interest and rationality. So, in much the same way, people tend to find ways to maximize their pleasure and avoid pain. So according to the theory, people who indulge in sexting are trying to gain pleasure out of it and are trying to avoid pain of either feeling lonely or unloved (Hirschi & Gottfredson, 2000).

Self-control is the ability to postpone immediate gratification in regards to a tiny reward so one can get a relatively larger benefit later in life (Anderson, 2004; Kirby & Herrnstein, 1995). Another

definition characterizes self-control as a mechanism through which the self- alters the behavioral patterns so it can inhibit the dominant responses of the body (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). According to some studies learning self-control at an early age can help an individual learn better self-regulatory skills at a later stage (Malouf et al., 2014). Moreover, it can also help the individual have better consequences in terms of general health and overall future life (Moffitt et al., 2011). Furthermore, high self-control was also related with having higher number of accomplishments and good grades in schools (Tangney et al., 2004) better quality interactive relationships (Vohs et al., 2011) and basically, a better-off life (Cheung et al., 2014).

In the literature it is seen that positive relationship between some personality traits like high extraversion and low agreeableness and conscientiousness and sexting by studies (Englander & McCoy, 2018; Weisskirch & Delevi, 2011). Furthermore, it was discovered that texting and sexting are strongly linked to attachment styles in young adults' romantic relationships (Drouin & Landgraff, 2012). It was seen by previous studies that sexual pleasure obtained by use of sexting, facilitated sexters to remain continuously engaged in this activity until their marriage (Andalib et al., 2013). Likewise, few studies indicated the association between sexting and psychological factors (Stasko & Geller, 2015; Woolard, 2011). Students who send and receive sext were more expected to account having a partner of the contrary sex and involved in sexual activity resulting in high prevalence of and the risks associated with sexting in adolescents. So, it is concluded from the literature that 15.7% reported sending sexts and 34.7% reported receiving sexts of the individuals in the past 6 months (Ghorashi et al., 2019).

Rationale

With the rise in modernity, people have started using social media platforms more and more. Their focus has also shifted to social networking sites like Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, or twitter. The greater usage allows them to stay connected to global communities (Anderson, 2004). The use of these sites has a huge impact on what humans do in their day to day lives (Adewuyi & Adefemi, 2016). The prevalence of sexting among individuals is relatively high (Mori et al., 2020). However, fewer studies have catered to the relationship between sexting and personality although the latter is known to be an important organizational construct that influences how people change their behaviors to adapt to changing stimuli (Caspi et al., 2008).

Furthermore, self-control as the tendency to restrict one's behavior in certain situations, has also found to have a significant relationship with all kinds of sexting behaviors (Stasko Geller, 2015). Moreover, relationship between sexting behavior and other covariates like age, gender, job status, working and non-working individuals, daily monthly income, relationship status, internet usage time and sexting frequency was also observed. This kind of research can come in handy for practitioners in terms of screening individuals for any risk-taking behaviors whenever an incident involving sexting occurs. The young adults have been neglected when it comes to in depth research in our culture. Additionally, in the existing study differences have been observed in terms of working and non-working individuals who were indulged in sexting behavior. The current study also aims to bridge the literature gap and tries to find out how different dimensions of personality and self-control can influence sexting attitudes and in turn sexting behaviors among young adults. Keeping in mind the above scenario, the objective of the study was finding the relationship between personality traits, self-control and sexting attitudes among young adults, to determine whether personality traits and self-control predict sexting attitudes in young adults.

Hypotheses

1. Personality traits such as emotionality, extraversion, openness to experience, and agreeableness will positively and honesty/humility, conscientiousness will negatively relate with sexting attitudes among young adults.
2. Self-control will be negatively related with sexting attitude among young adults.
3. Personality traits such as honesty/humility and conscientiousness and self-control will be negatively while emotionality, extraversion, openness to experience, and agreeableness positively predict sexting attitude in young adults.

Method

Sample

The sample comprised of 254 young adults with age range 18-30 years ($M = 22.28$, $SD = 2.70$). The data were collected via online means from students of public and private universities and professionals of different fields. The purposive sampling strategy was used to access the participants. The inclusion criteria for the sample

consisted of unmarried individuals who fall within the age range of 18-30 years and active internet/social media platforms users.

Measures

Following measures were used to assess the study variables.

Brief HEXACO Inventory

The scale of Brief HEXACO Inventory (de Vries, 2013) was used to assess the six broad personality factors; all of which contained the personality characteristics. The HEXACO Inventory was a short, 24-item scale, with six 4-item subscales; including honesty/humility, emotionality, extraversion, conscientiousness, openness to experience, and agreeableness. Rating was done by using five point-Likert scales ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*. Higher scores indicated higher involvement of specific personality characteristics among young adults. The alpha reliability for each of the subscales ranged from .71 to .79 (de Vries, 2013). In present study, Brief HEXECO Inventory ranged between .60 to .73 for its subscales.

Brief Self-Control Scale

The Brief Self-Control Scale (Tangney et al., 2004) was used to assess self-control among young adults. The scale consisted of 13 items with no subscales. Items were rated on a 5-point scale, anchored from 1 = *not at all like me* to 5 = *very much like me*. Responses from all the items were taken to sum up the total score which ranged from 13 to 65. Higher the score depicted higher level of self-control in young adults. The scale had alpha reliability of .82 (Malouf et al., 2014). In current study, self-control scale reported .80 alpha reliability while sexting attitudes such as fun and carefree, perceived risk and relation expectations showed the reliability ranged between .78 to .83.

Sexting Attitudes Scale

Sexting Attitude Scale (Weisskirch & Delevi, 2011) was developed to measure the attitude towards sexting among young adults. The scale comprised of 17 items including three subscales, named as fun and carefree (the carefree attitude of an individual), perceived risk (the risk an individual perceives while engaging in sexting behavior) and relational expectations (the expectations of

partners in a relationship for indulging in sexting). Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *not at all true* to 5 = frequently true. The sum of the item of the respective subscale indicates increase in that specific dimension of sexting attitude. Alpha reliability for each of the subscales was .89, .82; and .78 respectively (Weisskirch & Delevi, 2011); while in present study, alpha coefficient of .80 was acquired.

Demographic Information Sheet

The demographic questionnaire consisted of age, gender, institution, family income, family system, number of siblings, birth order, job status, relationship status, information related to internet usage along with sexting frequency items (sexually suggestive photo or video, photo or video in underwear or lingerie, nude photo or video, sexually suggestive text, text message propositioning sexual activity).

Procedure

For the present study, young adults were taken as sample. Permissions were taken from the authors of tools used in the study. Data were collected online using google form. An informed consent of the participant was taken before they participated in the study. The purpose and nature of the study were briefed to them. Confidentiality for their information was ensured to them. The participants were provided with the online questionnaires. In this way data collection was completed. After the completion of the data collection, it was analyzed using appropriate statistical analyses. For the present study around 500 participants were contacted among which 257 participants volunteered for the participation. The responses of the three participants were excluded because they did not fall in the age range. So, the response rate came out to be as 50.8%.

Results

Pearson product moment correlation analysis had been computed to find out the relationship between personality traits, self-control, and sexting attitudes among young adults (see Table 1). Furthermore, multiple hierarchical regression analyses were run to see if personality traits and self-control predict sexting attitudes among young adults. Independent sample *t*-test was run to see the difference in working and non-working young adults in terms of personality traits, self-control, and sexting attitudes (see Table 2).

Table 1*Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for the Study Variables*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1.Sexually suggestive photo or video	-	.77**	.80**	.65**	.54**	-.10	.00	.25**	-.01	.01	.06	-.07	.52**	.03	.42**
2.Photo or video in lingerie		-	.86**	.56**	.51**	-.03	.09	.23**	-.03	.01	.06	-.05	.47**	.02	.31**
3.Nude photo or video			-	.60**	.48**	-.05	.03	.24**	-.05	.04	.03	-.04	.45**	.04	.37**
4.Sexually suggestive text				-	.71**	-.18**	-.09	.19**	-.11	-.06	.10	-.17**	.57**	-.02	.48**
5.Text msg. pro. sex. activity					-	-.19**	-.07	.15*	-.09	.00	.08	-.17**	.46**	-.09	.41**
Personality Traits															
6.Honesty/Humility						-	.03	-.03	.10	.24**	-.15*	.27**	-.18**	.15*	-.23**
7.Emotionality							-	-.29**	-.02	-.12	-.19**	-.22**	-.02	-.24**	-.00
8.Extraversion								-	.07	.15*	.18**	.06	.13*	.08	.09
9.Agreeableness									-	-.00	.06	-.03	-.06	-.01	-.02
10.Conscientiousness										-	.06	.49**	-.07	.45**	.00
11.Openness to experience											-	-.06	.09	.01	.02
12.Self-Control												-	-.21**	.87**	-.15*
Sexting Attitudes															
13.Fun and Carefree													-	-.12	.62***
14.Perceived Risk														-	-.07
15.Relational Expectation															-
<i>M</i>	1.53	1.32	1.32	2.01	1.63	13.7	12.6	13.7	11.4	13.0	15.1	38.3	17.6	18.6	8.30
<i>SD</i>	0.84	0.71	0.71	1.13	0.98	2.56	2.87	2.63	2.51	2.61	2.43	8.00	6.48	3.24	4.13

Note. Msg. pro. sex. = Message propositioning sexual

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 1 showed the relationships between sexting attitudes (fun and carefree, perceived risk and relational expectation) and different personality traits (honesty/humility, emotionality, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience) and self-control. Honesty/humility personality trait was found to be positively related with perceived risk whereas negatively related with fun and carefree and relational expectations of sexting attitudes. However, negative relation of emotionality and positive relation of conscientiousness were found with perceived risk of sexting attitudes. Moreover, self-control was found to be positively related with perceived risk and negatively related with fun and carefree and relational expectations of sexting attitudes. Results also revealed that sexting behaviors such as sexually suggestive photo or video, photo or video in underwear or lingerie and nude photo or video, sexually suggestive text and text message propositioning sexual activity were found to be negatively related with honesty/humility and positively related with extraversion personality trait, also positive related with fun and carefree and relational expectation of sexting attitudes.

Results of multiple hierarchical regression analysis showed the effects of personality traits, self-control, and other covariates on sexting attitudes among young adults. For this purpose, age, job status, relationship status, Family Monthly Income, internet usage, sexting frequency, the subscales of personality traits and self-control were assessed to see their effects on sexting attitudes. The results revealed that the variance for fun and carefree aspect of sexting attitudes is 42% with $F(17, 209) = 8.98, p < .001$. The results revealed that self-control negatively predicted the fun and carefree sexting attitudes ($\beta = -.13, p < .05$) in young adults. Moreover, age was found to positively predict fun and carefree in young adults ($\beta = .12, p < .05$). The frequency of sexually suggestive photo or video ($\beta = .21, p < .05$), frequency of photo or video in lingerie or underwear ($\beta = .24, p < .05$) and frequency of sending sexually suggestive text ($\beta = .42, p < .001$) positively predicted the fun and carefree sexting attitude among young adults. However, none of the personality traits predicted it. The variance for perceived risk sexting attitudes is 80% with $F(17, 209) = 49.63, p < .001$. The results revealed that self-control positively predicted the perceived risk sexting attitude among adults ($\beta = .89, p < .001$). Further results revealed that emotionality negatively ($\beta = -.23, p < .001$) and conscientiousness positively ($\beta = .43, p < .001$) predicted the perceived risk in young adults. The results also revealed that relationship status negatively ($\beta = -.93, p < .01$) and internet usage time positively predicted perceived risk in young adults ($\beta = .13, p < .05$). Additionally, the frequency of sending

sexually suggestive text positively predicted the perceived risk in young adults ($\beta = .14, p < .05$). The variance for relational expectation sexting attitudes is 30% with $F(17, 209) = 5.37, p < .001$. The results revealed that honesty/humility negatively predicted the relational expectation sexting behavior among young adults ($\beta = -.15, p < .05$). Additionally, the frequency of sending sexually suggestive text positively predicted the relational expectations among young adults ($\beta = .26, p < .05$). However, self-control did not predict the relation expectations of sexting attitude among young adults.

Table 2

Group Differences on Working Status of Young Adults along Study Variables

Variables	Working (<i>n</i> = 71)	Non-working (<i>n</i> = 183)	Cohen's		
	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
Sexually suggestive photo or video	1.80(1.06)	1.42 (.73)	3.30	.00	.42
Photo or video in lingerie	1.5(.94)	1.23 (.58)	3.22	.00	.35
Nude photo or video	1.59(.98)	1.21 (.54)	3.89	.00	.50
Sexually suggestive text	2.32(1.25)	1.86 (1.06)	2.54	.00	.40
Text message propositioning sexual activity	1.80(1.02)	1.56 (.96)	1.71	.01	.24
Personality traits					
Honesty/Humility	13.6(2.76)	13.7 (2.48)	.505	.61	-
Emotionality	12.3(2.97)	12.7 (2.83)	.814	.42	-
Extraversion	14.3(2.71)	13.4 (2.56)	2.28	.02	.34
Agreeableness	11.2(2.74)	11.5 (2.41)	.67	.50	-
Conscientiousness	13.5(2.72)	12.9 (2.56)	1.73	.09	-
Openness to Experience	15.7(2.19)	14.9 (2.49)	2.55	.01	.34
Self-control	38.6(7.75)	38.1 (8.12)	.30	.70	-
Sexting Attitudes					
Fun and Carefree	19.6(6.97)	16.8 (6.13)	3.14	.00	.42
Perceived Risk	15.0(3.13)	14.4 (3.28)	1.19	.23	-
Relational Expectations	9.38(4.54)	7.88 (3.88)	2.61	.01	.36

The results of [Table 2](#) showed significant differences in working and non-working young adults in terms of sexting frequency, personality traits, self-control, and sexting attitudes. The sexting frequency (sexually suggestive photo or video, photo or video in underwear or lingerie, nude photo or video, sexually suggestive text, level of text message propositioning sexual activity) was found higher in working young adults as compared to non-working. Results showed that working young adults were higher in extraversion,

conscientiousness, and openness to experience than non-working adults. Furthermore, sexting attitudes such as fun and carefree and relational expectations were significantly higher in working young adults as compared to non-working young adults. However, non-significant differences were found in term of self-control.

Discussion

The results of this current study suggest that sexting is 21.1% prevalent in young adults and the behavior is found among both men and women between the ages of 18 and 30 years. The study also concluded that personality traits were significantly related to all three aspects of sexting attitudes. Moreover, they also revealed that self-control was also negatively significantly related to sexting attitudes. Furthermore, both personality traits and self-control also predicted certain aspects of sexting attitudes.

The first hypothesis of the current study suggested that there was likely going to be a relationship between different personality traits and sexting attitudes. Previous studies done in this area also hinted at similar results. The study done by [Mori et al. \(2020\)](#) also concluded that there was a relationship between personality traits and sexting among individuals. It was also concluded that extraversion was highly rated to visual forms of sexting behavior. The current study, on the other hand, suggested that conscientiousness was positively related to perceived risk aspect of sexting behavior. This further suggests that extraverted people, the ones who are more carefree and live more freely tend to indulge more in this behavior. On the other hand, people with high conscientiousness, the ones who live life carefully, tend to be more concerned about the perceived risk of sexting. The study by [Englander \(2019\)](#) also suggests a significant relationship between sexting and personality traits. The results of this study reveal that highly extrovert and neurotic people were more likely to indulge in sexting behavior. Moreover, it was also revealed that people who had low scores in terms of conscientiousness and agreeableness had a lower score in sexting too. This was in line with our results that revealed a positive and significant relationship between conscientiousness and perceived risk.

Results of the present study revealed that self-control negatively predicted fun and carefree and positively predicted the perceived risk aspect of sexting attitudes among young adults. These results are in line with the study conducted by [Caspi et al. \(2005\)](#) who also concluded that self-control was a significant predictor of individual's participation in sexting and self-control positively related with every

type of sexting behavior among individuals. Furthermore, another important study was done by [Dir et al. \(2013\)](#) also concluded that people with high self-control are more likely to sexting their life. It also suggested that even when the other factors mediated the role, self-control remained a relevant factor in all kinds of sexting behaviors. The similarity in these results suggests that self-control is a strong predictor of sexting behavior and a factor that cannot be ignored during discourse. Moreover, the results of the current study are also in line with self-control theory presented by [Gottfredson \(2007\)](#) suggesting a negative relationship between self-control and perceived risk. The theory also suggests that people who tend to have greater self-control learn to control their behaviors early on in their life. This is also true for behaviors that pose a certain threat. So, in this scenario, people who see sexting as something that could pose a threat or create problems in the future, are more than likely to exhibit more self-control and will tend to not indulge in the behavior. Moreover, self-control and fun and carefree aspect of sexting also had a negative relationship. This is also in line with the theory that suggests that people with high self-control will act with more rationality.

Furthermore, the current study also revealed that internet usage time predicted the relational expectations aspect of sexting attitude of individuals. Studies in this area, like the one conducted by [Anderson \(2005\)](#) reveal that the amount of time people spend on the internet is positively related to more favorable perceptions about one's online romantic relationship. This is also in line with the premise set by the theory of reasoned actions ([Camp et al., 1984](#)) that intentions can predict behaviors and the behaviors that are perceived to be positive tend to be carried out more. These results are in line with the study by [Woolard \(2011\)](#) who concluded that individuals tend to enjoy sexting and that they are more likely to do it prior to having actual sexual experiences. Additionally, the current study revealed a positive relationship between age and fun and carefree aspect of sexting. This was in line with the earlier study that suggested that sexting instances increased with age as the person transitions into young adulthood ([Englander, 2019](#); [Englander & McCoy, 2018](#)). One major reason for this could be the increase in curiosity levels caused by boredom as the individuals' age ([Camp et al., 1984](#)). Another important finding revealed a positive relationship between fun and carefree aspect of Sexting behaviors and sexting frequency, sending sexually explicit texts, sending nudes, and sending sexually suggestive photos and videos. Furthermore, relationship status negatively predicted the perceived risk in young adults. This is in line with the study conducted by [Stasko and Geller \(2015\)](#) whose results revealed that sexting is

highly prevalent in context of a committed relationship and lesser prevalent in context of a causal relationship. This means that people in relationships were less likely to worry about any possible consequences of sexting. There could be several reasons for this. People in relationships have greater attachment anxiety that leads them to have positive attitudes towards sexting. They are also less likely to accept it as normal and hence are less likely to resist this behavior (Weisskerch & Delevi, 2011).

Moreover, in the present study significant differences in terms of all aspects of sexting were also found between working and non-working individuals. One major reason for the difference may be in the form of frustration that many employees face due to their stressful jobs. The frustration-handling model suggests many underlying reasons for why people feel frustrated with their jobs. It could be due to workplace conditions or job insecurity. However, what's important to note is the effect of this frustration on the life of the employee. It not only leads to anxiety but also creates other psychological barriers for individuals. The use of social media and internet result in people feeling relaxed. But more importantly, individuals reported sexting as a positive experience and one that fulfills their need for gratification (Andalib et al., 2013). Moreover, sexting activity is also perceived as fun and pleasurable (Anwar et al., 2019).

Limitations and Suggestions

The study focuses primarily on young adults. For future studies it is suggested that a comparative study between young adults and adolescents should be done. The study was done on working and non-working individuals. However, future studies should try to investigate gender and occupation wise differences among working classes in terms of sexting behaviors. Furthermore, a profession wise study based on sexting behavior should also be done to see the likelihood of certain professionals in influencing the behavior. The study used more non-working as compared to working individuals. For further comparative researchers, a more balanced sample should be used.

Implications

The study contributes towards the field of cyber psychology. It tries to understand the underlying conditions that compel people to carry out sexting behaviors. Carrying out our research would allow more and more people to come forward and talk about it. This will generate active discourse in the community and will make people see

the ground realities (the high prevalence of sexting in Pakistan). Seminars should be conducted in schools, colleges and university focusing on sex education where young adults should be taught the difference between consensual sexting and harassment. Moreover, students should also be taught about internet safety so that they can use the platform without getting their privacy or their rights hinged. Parents should be given basic awareness so they can support their children if needed. Moreover, they should be required to instill greater moral values by using better parental practices. This will actively prevent individuals from indulging in any inappropriate behavior. On top of that, media outlets also have an active responsibility in ensuring that the discussion around the topic gets normalized. This is because if sexting remains a taboo, it will leave people doing it vulnerable to harm and blackmail.

Conclusion

It was concluded that honesty/humility positively relates to perceived risk of sexting attitude whereas negatively relates to fun and carefree and relational expectations of sexting attitudes. It was also concluded that emotionality negatively, whereas conscientiousness positively relates with perceived risk of sexting attitudes. Moreover, it was also concluded that self-control was found to be positively related with perceived risk and negatively related with fun and carefree aspects of sexting attitude. The results also concluded that honesty/humility negatively predicted the relational expectations in young adults. Additionally, significant differences in working and non-working young adults were found in term of sexting frequency, personality types, and sexting attitudes.

References

- Adewuyi, E. O., & Adefemi, K. (2016). Behavior change communication using social media: A review. *International Journal of Communication and Health*, 9(1), 109-116.
- Ainslie, G. (1975). Specious reward: A behavioral theory of impulsiveness and impulse control. *Psychological Bulletin*, 82(3), 463-496
[//doi.org/10.1037/h0076860](https://doi.org/10.1037/h0076860).
- Alonso, C., & Romero, E. (2019). Sexting behaviors in adolescents: Personality predictors and psychosocial outcomes in a one-year follow-up. *Annals of Psychology*, 35(2), 214-220.
- Andalib, T. W., Darun, M. R., & Azizan, A. (2013). Frustration of employees: Reasons, dimensions and resolving techniques. *Journal of Integration Knowledge*, 18(1), 1-11.

- Anderson, T. L. (2004). Towards a theory of online learning. *Theory and Practice of Online Learning*, 2(1), 109-119.
- Anderson, T. L. (2005). Relationships among internet attitudes, internet use, romantic beliefs, and perceptions of online romantic relationships. *Cyberpsychology and Behavior*, 8(6), 521-531.
- Anwar, N., Saleem, M., Siddique, A. R., Akhtar, F., & Durrani, A. K. (2019). Exploring causes and triggers of sexting among university students: A qualitative conceptualization in focus. *Journal of Research and Reviews in Social Sciences Pakistan*, 2(2), 541 -554.
- Baiocco, R., Chirumbolo, A., Bianchi, D., Ioverno, S., Morelli, M., & Nappa, M. R. (2017). How HEXACO personality traits predict different selfie-posting behaviors among adolescents and young adults. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 7, 2080. doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2016.02080.
- Baumeister, R. F., Vohs, K. D., & Tice, D. M. (2007). The strength model of self-control. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 16(2), 351-355. doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8721.2007.005.
- Brennan, K. A., & Bosson, J. K. (1998). Attachment-style differences in attitudes toward and reactions to feedback from romantic partners: An exploration of the relational bases of self-esteem. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 24(7), 699-714.
- Calvert, C. (2009). Sex, cell phones, privacy, and the first amendment: When children become child pornographers and the Lolita effect undermines the law. *Common Law Conspectus: Journal of Communications Law and Policy*, 18(1), 1-16.
- Camp, C. J., Rodrigue, J. R., & Olson, K. R. (1984). Curiosity in young, middle-aged, and older adults. *Educational Gerontology*, 10(5), 387-400. doi.org/10.1080/0380127840100504.
- Campbell, S. W., & Park, Y. J. (2014). Predictors of mobile sexting among teens: Toward a new explanatory framework. *Mobile, Media, and Communication*, 2(1), 20-39. doi.org/10.1177/2050157913502645.
- Caspi, A., Roberts, B. W., & Shiner, R. L. (2005). Personality development: Stability change. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 56(3), 453-484.
- Cha, S. S., & Seo, B. K. (2018). Smartphone use and smartphone addiction in middle school students in Korea: Prevalence, social networking service, and game use. *Health Psychology Open*, 5(1), 1-15. doi.org/10.1177/2055102918755046.
- Cheung, T. T., Gillebaart, M., Kroese, F., & De Ridder, D. (2014). Why are people with high self-control happier? The effect of trait self-control on happiness as mediated by regulatory focus. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 5, 722. doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00722.
- De Vries, R. E. (2013). The 24-item Brief HEXACO Inventory. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 47(6), 871-880.

- Dir, A. L., Cyders, M. A., & Coskunpinar, A. (2013). From the bar to the bed via mobile phone: A first test of the role of problematic alcohol use, sexting, and impulsivity-related traits in sexual hookups. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 29(4), 1664-1670. doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2013.01.039.
- Dodaj, A., Sesar, K., & Jerinić, S. (2019). Relationship between sexting and psychological difficulties: Prospective research. *European Congress of Psychology*, 16(2), 178-188.
- Drouin, M., & Landgraff, C. (2012). Texting, sexting, and attachment in college students' romantic relationships. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 28(2), 444-449. doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2011.10.015.
- Englander, E. (2019). Back to the drawing board with cyberbullying. *Journal of the American Medical Association Pediatrics*, 173(6), 513-514. doi.org/10.1001/jamapediatrics.2019.0690
- Englander, E., & McCoy, M. (2018). Sexting: Prevalence, age, sex, and outcomes. *Journal of the American Medical Association Pediatrics*, 172(4), 317-318. doi.org/10.1001/jamapediatrics.2017.5682
- Eysenck, & H. J. (1981). *A model for personality*. New York: Springer Verlag.
- Gámez-Guadix, M., de Santisteban, P., & Resett, S. (2017). Sexting among Spanish adolescents: Prevalence and personality profiles. *Psicothema*, 29(1), 29-34. doi.org/10.7334/psicothema2016.222
- Ghorashi, Z., Loripoor, M., & Lotfipour-Rafsanjani, S. M. (2019). Mobile Access and Sexting Prevalence in High School Students in Rafsanjan City, Iran. *Iranian Journal of Psychiatry and Clinical Psychology*, 24(4), 416-425.
- Goldberg, L. R. (1990). An alternative description of personality: The big-five factor structure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 59(6), 121-126. doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.59.6.1216.
- Gottfredson, M. R. (2007). Self-control theory of crime. *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*, 8(1), 1-4.
- Hirschi, T., & Gottfredson, M. R. (2000). In defense of self-control. *Theoretical Criminology*, 4(1), 55-69. doi.org/10.1177/1362480600004001003.
- Kirby, K. N., & Herrnstein, R. J. (1995). Preference reversals due to myopic discounting of delayed reward. *Psychological Sciences*, 6(1), 83-89. doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.1995.tb00311.
- Kopecký, K. (2012). Sexting among Czech preadolescents and adolescents. *The New Educational Review*, 28(2), 39-48.
- Lenhart, A. (2009). *Teens and sexting: A portrait of generation next*. Washington DC: PEW Internet & American Life Project.
- Malouf, E. T., Schaefer, K. E., Witt, E. A., Moore, K. E., Stuewig, J., & Tangney, J. P. (2014). The brief self-control scale predicts jail

inmates' recidivism, substance dependence, and post-release adjustment. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 40(3), 334-347.

- McCrae, R. R., & John, O. P. (1992). An introduction to the five-factor model and its applications. *Journal of Personality*, 60(2), 175-215.
- Millon, T. H., & Grossman, S. D. (2005). Personology: A theory based on evolutionary concepts. *Major Theories of Personality Disorder*, 8(4), 332-390.
- Moffitt, T. E., Arseneault, L., Belsky, D., Dickson, N., Hancox, R. J., Harrington, H., & Caspi, A. (2011). A gradient of childhood self-control predicts health, wealth, and public safety. *Proceedings of The National Academy of Sciences*, 108(7), 2693-2698.
- Mori, C., Cooke, J. E., Temple, J. R., Ly, A., Lu, Y., Anderson, N., & Madigan, S. (2020). The prevalence of sexting behaviors among emerging adults: A meta-analysis. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 49(8), 1103-1119. doi.org/10.1007/s10508-020-01656-4.
- Muraven, M., & Baumeister, R. F. (2000). Self-regulation and depletion of limited resources: Does self-control resemble a muscle? *Psychological Bulletin*, 126(1), 247-259. doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.126.2.247.
- Reyns, B. W., Henson, B., & Fisher, B. S. (2014). Digital deviance: Low self-control and opportunity as explanations of sexting among college students. *Sociological Spectrum*, 34(3), 273-292. doi.org/10.1080/02732173.2014.895642.
- Rice, E., Rhoades, H., Winetrobe, H., Sanchez, M., Montoya, J., Plant, A., & Kordic, T. (2012). Sexually explicit cell phone messaging associated with sexual risk among adolescents. *Pediatrics*, 130(4), 667-673. doi.org/10.1542/peds.2012-0021.
- Schmitz, S., & Siry, L. (2011). Teenage folly or child abuse? State responses to sexting by minors in the US and Germany. *Policy and Internet*, 3(2), 1-26. doi.org/10.2202/1944-2866.1127.
- Stasko, E. C., & Geller, P. (2015). *Sexting and intimate partner relationships among adults*, (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation), Drexel University, Philadelphia, USA.
- Takao, M., Takahashi, S., & Kitamura, M. (2009). Addictive personality and problematic mobile phone use. *Cyberpsychology and Behavior*, 12(5), 501-507. doi.org/10.1089/cpb.2009.0022.
- Tangney, J. P., Baumeister, R. F., & Boone, A. L. (2004). High self-control predicts good adjustment, less pathology, better grades, and interpersonal success. *Journal of Personality*, 72(2), 271-324.
- Temple, J. R., Le, V. D., van den Berg, P., Ling, Y., Paul, J. A., & Temple, B. W. (2014). Brief report: Teen sexting and psychosocial health. *Journal of Adolescence*, 37(1), 33-36.
- Van Ouytsel, J., Walrave, M., Ponnet, K., & Heirman, W. (2015). The association between adolescent sexting, psychosocial difficulties, and

- risk behavior: Integrative review. *The Journal of School Nursing*, 31(1), 54-69. doi.org/10.1177/1059840514541964.
- Vohs, K. D., Finkenauer, C., & Baumeister, R. F. (2011). The sum of friends' and lovers' self-control scores predicts relationship quality. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 2(2), 138-145. doi.org/10.1177/1948550610385710.
- Weisskirch, R. S., & Delevi, R. (2011). Sexting and adult romantic attachment. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 27(5), 1697-1701. doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2011.02.008.
- West, J. H., Lister, C. E., Hall, P. C., Crookston, B. T., Snow, P. R., Zvietcovich, M. E., & West, R. P. (2014). Sexting among Peruvian adolescents. *BMC Public Health*, 14(1), 1-7. doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-14-811.
1. Woolard, A. (2011). *The frequency, attitudes, and beliefs of sexting among college students*, (Unpublished Masters Thesis), Eastern Illinois University, Illinois, United State of America
 2. Ybarra, M. L., & Mitchell, K. J. (2014). Sexting and its relation to sexual activity and sexual risk behavior in a national survey of adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 55(6), 757-764.

Received 26 January 2021

Revision received 19 April 2022