

Explicit Love Letters among Teens- A Study on Sexting

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Abstract:

Social and legal complexities nowadays have become a trend. It carries connotation of change and transition embedded within particular in stereotypes of behavior, and in effect is in its implication of delineating of homogenous group. Whilst it is difficult to trace a starting point for sexting as practice generally, and for teenage sexting in particular its emergence in UK. Press report as a problem in need of intervention seems to start in 2002. In this paper concept behind sexting and factors that may affect its consequences has been discussed. The level at and beyond which sexting and intimacy level turns into an offence has been discussed by reviewing various paper as well as its psychological background among teenager.

Keywords: Teenager, Sexting, Offence, Intimacy.

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Introduction

What is Sexting?

We define sexting as “the sending or receiving of sexually explicit or sexually-suggestive images or video via a cell phone.” Most commonly, the term has been used to describe incidents where teenagers take nude or seminude (e.g., topless) pictures of themselves and distribute those pictures to others using their cell phones (although it is also possible to distribute such images via social networking sites, email, instant messaging programs, and video chat). The images are often initially sent to romantic partners or interests but can find their way into the hands of others, which ultimately is what creates the problems (**Hinduja, 2010**).

Cell phones allow youth to keep in regular contact with parents and friends alike, and serve as a communication safety line in difficult situations. Sending and receiving text messages via one’s cell phone has become extremely popular, especially among adolescents. One recent study estimated that teens send or receive an average of 3,000 text messages each month (**Lenhart, 2010**).

Review of Literature

Reyns et al. (2011) through their paper explored the possible link between sexting and online personal victimization. They concluded that the respondents who were engaged in sexting were more likely to not only experience cybervictimization, but also to be victimized by different types of cybervictimization.

Wolak and Finkelho (2011), basically worked on typology of sexting episodes based on a review of over 550 cases obtained from a national survey of law enforcement agencies. The cases all involved “youth-produced sexual images,” defined as images of minors created by minors that could qualify as child pornography under applicable criminal statutes. They categorized sexting into two as ‘Aggravated’ and ‘Experimental’. He described aggravated incidents involved criminal or abusive elements beyond the creation, sending or possession of youth-produced sexual images. These additional elements included-

- 1) Adult involvement; or
- 2) criminal or abusive behavior by minors such as sexual abuse, ex- tortion, threats; malicious conduct arising from interpersonal conflicts; or creation or sending or showing of images without the knowledge or against the will of a minor who was pictured.

The paper concluded that by contrast, youth took pictures of themselves to send to established boy- or

girlfriends, to create romantic interest in other youth, or for reasons such as attention-seeking, but there was no criminal behavior beyond the creation or sending of images, no apparent malice and no lack of willing participation by youth who were pictured.

Dake (2012), centralized his work to assess the prevalence of sexting among sixth through twelfth grade students and its correlations with other risk behaviors. He surveyed 35 different schools in a mid-western state. According to his study, he provided the data that 17% of students were engaged in sexting, which varied significantly by age (3% of 12-year-olds to 32% of 18-year-olds). He found significant correlations between sexting and sexual behaviors, substance use behaviors, emotional health behaviors, and time spent texting. He concluded with suggestion that teenagers should be addressed by parents, teachers, and mental health professionals who interact with adolescents.

Curnutt (2012), majorly worked on “sexting’s” cultural value and social uses by examining celebrities’ production and distribution of sexual imagery on Twitter. The paper overall discuss and revolve around for the concerns for the result of technological convergence and the prevalence of social media, teens and celebrities who are using “candid” pictures of their sexuality to remediate themselves in a fashion or so called trend that generates a specific form of user generated capital. It was concluded that anxiety surrounding high school-age sexters has less to do with teens documenting their sexuality than it does with the ways that new forms of text-based media articulate the libidinal status of teenage sexuality in contemporary culture.

Mitchell et al. (2013), in their paper they have majorly worked on estimation of involvement of youth in sexting in the past year as well as to provide the nature of the sexual images. Their study was based on a cross-sectional national telephone survey of 1560 youth Internet users of age ranging from 10 to 17 years. Their study showed considerably varied result depending on the nature of the images or videos and the role of the youth involved. Two and one-half percent of youth were involved in nude or nearly nude pictures or videos but this data was reduced to 1.0% when it comes to images that were sexually explicit. 7.1% percentage of youth participated said that they had received nude or nearly nude images of others while 5.9% of youth reported receiving sexually explicit images. In their paper it was concluded that the rate of youth exposure to sexting highlights a need to provide them with information about legal consequences of sexting and advice about what to do if they receive a sexting image.

Karaian (2013), majorly worked on examination on the motivations, techniques and potential consequences of the governance of teenage sexting. For his study, he has examined the over-representation of white, middle-class, heterosexual, female sexters, and abstinence from sexting discourses. His study revealed anxieties about the deterioration of the moral authority of the white, middle-class, heterosexual nuclear family; constitutes certain teenage girls' unintelligibility as sexual subjects; and, undermines teenage girls' capability to challenge a normative sexual order in which they are often blamed extra/legally for their sexual persecution.

Döring (2014), majorly worked on that how can education implementation can prevent the various and severe risks sexting possess. His paper summarizes existing data on sexting prevalence (17 studies), which revealed that sexting is much more common among adults than among youths, with increasing prevalence among adolescents as they grow older. Further it was also added in the paper that the current state of sexting research by reviewing all 50 sexting papers in the PsycINFO and PubMed databases published between 2009 and 2013 regarding their coverage of the risks and/or opportunities associated with sexting. It was concluded in his study that adolescent sexting is considered as risky behavior and links it to sexual objectification and violence, to risky sexual behavior, and to negative consequences like bullying by peers and criminal prosecution under child pornography laws. His paper also analyzed the sexting risk prevention messages of 10 online educational campaigns. Such campaigns typically rely on scare scenarios, emphasize the risk of bullying and criminal prosecution, engage in female victim blaming, and recommend complete abstinence from sexting. He closed his paper by questioning the abstinence approach in sexting education, and makes suggestions on how to move towards an evidence-based approach to sexting risk prevention that acknowledges both adolescents' vulnerability and sexual agency.

Ouytsel et al. (2014), their work majorly include to establish the links between adolescent sexting, other

types of risk behavior, and its emotional and psychosocial conditions. He suggested further that sexting incidents constitutes of potential school safety risk. Just as with other types of adolescent risk behavior, school nurses might have to initiate the first response when a sexting episode arises, but a school nurse's role goes beyond intervention. He studied seven databases and examine. According to his work it was shown that sexting is associated with a range of health-risk behaviors and teenagers who are engaged in sexting are found to experience peer pressure and a range of emotional difficulties.

Hinduja (2015), has discussed in his article about perception of sexting and has created a guideline for teenage and parent as well so as to prevent teenage into falling such traps. It was discussed in the paper that what could be the Formal and Informal Responses to such incidences and what schools should do if such scenarios do occur in their premises with any of their student. Further the call for duration and outreach was also discussed with certain facts that s deep rooted in our society.

Conclusion

Involvement in sexting is positively foreseen by connectedness to peers through mobile communication and negatively predicted by connectedness to family. Although sexting was less likely with mobile connectedness to family, heavy-handed parental control over the technology was not a predictor. Sexting evolving into more glamorous trend among teens but it has changed into criminal activity when it comes to young adults. The moral values and background of upbringing of individuals plays key role often to teenagers when it comes to sexting. The choice is in our hand and intensity of building trust in relationship cannot be relied upon the exchange of sexting. Several lives can be prevented from humiliation and putting it to an end if proper parenting and guidance is provided to teenagers.

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