



# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SEXTING AND GENDER ROLES IN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS



*Nature and determinants of sexting among adolescents and youth: A cross-national study*  
Funded by the Croatian Science Foundation  
(Grant number 3553)

- The definition of sexting varies widely across studies ..... exchanging sexually explicit messages, images and videos between mobile phones.
- Prevalence of sending sexually explicit messages among adolescents' ranges from 7% to 27% (Cooper et al., 2016).



The aim of study

**To examine the sexting behaviors of surveyed participants through the lens of masculinity and femininity.**



# Participants

- N = 352 high school students (264 girls, 88 boys)
- Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia
- Between 14 and 20 years ( $M=16.347$ ,  $SD=1.247$ ).
- 24.4% in 1st grade, 18.2% in 2nd grade, 37.2% in 3rd grade and 20.2% in 4th grade.
- The majority of participants (74.2%) had not been in an intimate relationship.

# Instruments

1) *Sexting Behaviors and Motives Questionnaire (SBM-Q)* by del Rey et al. (2021), distinction between:

- sending sexual content,
- motives for sending,
- victims of non-consensual forwarding,
- receiving sexual content,
- forwarding content,
- and motives for forwarding.

39 questions, a five-point rating scale ranging from 0 (never) to 4 (daily).

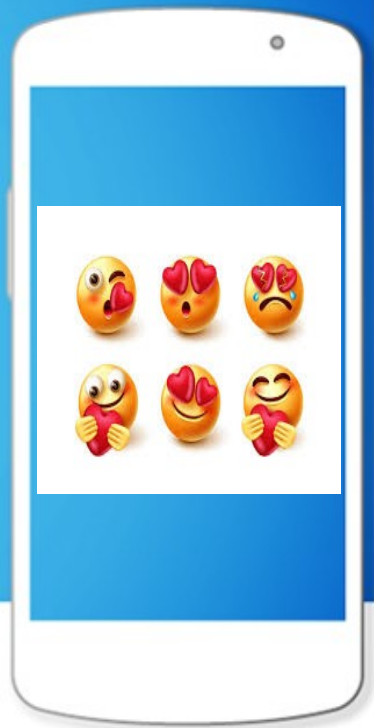
Internal consistency reliability (.84-.91).



- **2) *Traditional Masculinity-Femininity Scale (TMF)*** measures according to Kachel et al. (2016) the gender role self-concept. 6 items - the “core” of masculinity/femininity by referring to three key gender role aspects related to gender-role adoption.



# Percentage of high school students who reported to participate in sexting according to gender



| <b>Sexting behavior</b> | <b>Girls<br/>N (%)</b> | <b>Boys<br/>N (%)</b> | <b>Total<br/>N (%)</b> |
|-------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Sending</b>          | 85 (32.2%)             | 31 (35.3%)            | 116 (33.0%)            |
| <b>Receiving</b>        | 129 (48.9%)            | 41 (46.6%)            | 170 (48.3%)            |
| <b>Forwarding</b>       | 126<br>(47.32%)        | 34 (38.6%)            | 160 (45.5%)            |
| <b>Total sexting</b>    | 139 (52.7%)            | 51 (58.0%)            | 190 (54.0%)            |

## Percentage of high school girls and boys by their gender role



| Gender role    | Girls<br>N (%) | Boys<br>N (%) | Total<br>N (%) |
|----------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| Gender-neutral | 73<br>(27.7%)  | 11 (12.5%)    | 84<br>(23.9%)  |
| Masculine      | 51<br>(19.3%)  | 66<br>(75.0%) | 117<br>(33.3%) |
| Feminine       | 140<br>(53.0%) | 11 (12.5%)    | 151<br>(43.0%) |



# Correlations between sexting types and gender role identity by sex



|                  | Gender role |      |
|------------------|-------------|------|
|                  | Girls       | Boys |
| Sexting behavior |             |      |
| Sending          | .16**       | -.08 |
| Receiving        | .16**       | -.01 |
| Forwarding       | .15*        | .04  |

*Testing differences in sexting types across gender role groups defined as gender-neutral, feminine, and masculine*

| Sexting behavior  | Neutral |     | Feminine |     | Masculine |      | F    | p    | Partial $\eta^2$ |
|-------------------|---------|-----|----------|-----|-----------|------|------|------|------------------|
|                   | M       | SD  | M        | SD  | M         | SD   |      |      |                  |
| <b>Sending</b>    | .12     | .53 | .33      | .60 | .41       | .78  | 1.54 | .02* | .17              |
| <b>Receiving</b>  | .36     | .81 | .63      | .92 | .71       | 1.14 | 1.24 | .16  | .14              |
| <b>Forwarding</b> | .24     | .43 | .48      | .69 | .51       | .90  | .86  | .72  | .10              |

# Discussion

- The inconsistencies between prevalence findings regarding sexting behavior across studies is not surprising. Prevalence rates of sexting among adolescents vary depending on the criteria used to define the phenomenon (Barrense-Dias et al., 2017)
- The distribution of gender role classifications among participants supports assumptions related to general social norms in where personality traits closely reflect social expectations for girls and boys (Berger & Krahe, 2013; Echabe, 2010; Kim et al., 2013).



# Discussion

- The results show that all three types of sexting behavior correlated with masculinity/femininity scores of participants for the female gender, but not for the male gender. Girls who identified themselves as feminine were more likely to participate in sexting than those who ascribed themselves as masculine. This pattern is consistent with Springston's research (2017).



# Discussion

- It is possible that masculine high school students are more likely to send sexts. These findings are not surprising, as adherence to masculine norms has been associated with several aspects of sexual activity, such as more sexual partners, less intimacy with these partners at last sexual intercourse, less consistent condom use, and less belief in men's responsibility in preventing pregnancy (Bell et al., 2015).



# Conclusion

- Given the rise of sexting among adolescents, the issue of gender role needs to be given greater consideration in future research and further study is essential to make progress in understanding this complex phenomenon.
- Future research based on these findings can also examine how these results relate to psychological outcomes in high school students.





Thank you for attention!