



# Why Do Indonesian Teens Have Tempted To Do Sexting? Implications For School Counselors Why Teenegers Temped to Do Sexting

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**Abstract.** The development of social media brings positive and negative impacts on adolescents. One of the negative impacts is that it makes it easier for teens to engage in online sexual activity. The research aims to identify the duration of adolescents using SNSs, do they do sexting or not, the factor affecting them, and what impact they have on their daily lives. Researchers surveyed 181 adolescents aged 15 to 19 years. The data was collected using a descriptive questionnaire about SNSs usage and motivation to Sexting Questionnaire (MSQ). The researcher adapted and tested the validity and reliability of the MSQ, which included 11 valid items with a reliability score of 0.881 and a KMO score of 0.728. The results showed that 12% of respondents had sexted at least once during the last three months to ensure that their body image was acceptable to their partner and sexual urges. Research data also shows that self-control is the main thing for those who want to stop sexting. The findings encourage school counselors' role in providing counseling services for adolescents to have better self-control as an effective way to eliminate sexting intentions.

**Keywords:** sexting behavior, adolescent, motivation to sext, use of social networking sites

## 1 Introduction

Teenagers in high school today cannot be separated from Social Networking Sites (SNSs). Teenagers use SNSs to find information related to things in everyday life, as well as for academic purposes [1]. Many high school students use SNSs to improve their well-being in daily life [21]. However, it turns out that many students who use

SNSs end up experiencing problems such as addiction, dependence, deviant behavior, and other psychological problems [13].

One of the problems that arise and get much attention is sexting. Sexting is the behavior of sending or receiving sexual images or messages through social media [19]. Adolescents carry out this sexting behavior to flirt, get attention, or show affection to their partners like adults [25]. They dare to do sexting because they feel safe using social media [22]. Although sexting has risks, according to the perpetrators, the risks will not be as significant as when engaging in sexual activity in the real world, such as pregnancy, abusive sexual behavior, or legal problems [29]. However, sexting still carries risks, such as revealing explicit content, revenge porn, and cyberbullying [24].

Previous research has shown that, according to teenagers, sexting is common among teenagers [22]. Likewise, teenagers in Indonesia have also had sexting for various reasons [30]. This article will discuss how high school students in several big cities in Indonesia use their social media. The results and discussion of this paper will begin by exploring respondents' age, gender, and activities they did use SNSs, the factors that caused them to do sexting, what impact on job school completion and its impact on other sexual behaviors.

### **1.1 Technological Development and Sexting**

Following This technological progress seems to be two sides of a sword [21]. On the one hand, it is very beneficial because it supports the progress of science, facilitates social interaction, and facilitates education, such as during the Covid-19 pandemic, which makes students study online. However, on the other hand, these technological advances also have opposing sides, such as the emergence of phishing, hoaxes, and sexting. A few decades ago, access to sexual behavior was minimal, both direct and indirect physical, sexual activity, with the help of technology [13]. Not everyone has a camera, so the content is limited. Likewise, the way to spread sexual content, which requires VCD, Flash disc, or MMS, which tends to be difficult, is not as easy as now, which can be created and sent privately via SNSs [25].

Although it has some negative impacts, the research results show that sexting is a behavior that is practiced mainly by students in America [20], Australia [22], Spain [29], as well as in African countries such as Botswana [24]. Sexting behavior occurs because these teen sexters perceive sexting as a way to pay attention to their partner, and they believe that their partner will keep the content confidential, even though they are aware that the risk of spreading the content will still exist [30]. Sexting behavior is not only done with a partner. As Beckmeyer points out, 38% of sex offenders do not have sex with their partner, 63% initiate sexting while not dating, and have no direct experience of having sex [4]. In conclusion, sexting can begin other sexual behavior [10]. However, many teen sexters are not aware of the impact of sexting [9].

### **1.2 More about the submission template**

Indonesia is a country that adheres to eastern culture. One of the characteristics of eastern culture in Indonesia is the strong influence of religious values in the daily lives of

its inhabitants [17]. This characteristic also impacts teachers' and parents' lack of sex education because sex education is considered taboo. Sex education is also often referred to as supporting promiscuity [5]. However, it seems that eastern cultures against sex education face significant challenges with the inclusion of western culture and information disclosure, so adolescents tend to be permissive toward premarital sex behavior [28]. In contrast, well-done sex education can prevent risky sexual behavior and increase sexual abstinence for the target [27].

The results of other studies show increased sexual behavior among Indonesian teenagers from year to year. Research in Surabaya in 2015 showed that 56% of respondents claimed to have had premarital sex. Risky sexual behavior also causes pregnancy out of wedlock. In 2019 there were 48 cases, which increased to 106 cases in 2020 marriage due to pregnancy in Blitar [32]. Likewise, in Kudus, in 2020, there were 112 cases of pregnancy out of wedlock [26]. Uncovering the causes of sexual behavior among adolescents is undoubtedly a challenge. Whether sexting is the initial trigger of sexual behavior or not. This study will explore the factors that make teenagers tempted to do sexting and how it affects them.

## **2 Methods**

### **2.1 Research Design**

This study uses a survey method by giving questionnaires to participants. This study involved adolescent subjects aged 16-19 with one of the SNSs with direct message facilities such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook. Participants are high school students willing to fill out the online form on some of the SNSs above. The researcher uses a convenience sample by distributing research instruments through direct messages and posting on the researcher's social media. At the beginning of the questionnaire, the researcher stated that the respondents of this study were volunteers who would not get negative results from filling out the questionnaire because this study did not collect personal data such as names, addresses, emails, or cellphone numbers.

### **2.2 Instruments**

This study uses two measuring instruments. The first questionnaire was to collect data on age, gender, and questions about the impact of sexting and how to deal with sexting, specifically for respondents who answered that they had had sexting. The second scale uses the Motivation to Sexting (MMS) instrument developed by Bianchi in 2016, which consists of thirteen items [6]. After going through the language adaptation process and testing the validity and reliability, 11 valuable items were after examining the initial 13 items. The validity and reliability test results showed that the 11 items had a reliability score of 0.881 in the very high-reliability category. The KMO score for all items is 0.728. The results of the factor analysis test on the instrument resulted in three aspects of sexting motivation, namely for sexual purposes, strengthening the sender's body image, and forced reasons. Table 1 shows the results of the factor analysis.

Research respondents defined sexting as "sending messages, voice messages, pictures, or videos of oneself, either partially or wholly, to others to direct the conversation to light/heavy sexual matters via smartphones or social media." These items include: I do sexting to increase the passion in my relationship; to get sexually stimulated; to feel always needed by a partner; to seduce a partner sexually; to get pleasure from others; to earn money or gifts; being forced by others; to exchange for something I need; to see if I am attractive enough to others; to make sure that my body is sexy; to see if I am sexually attractive.

**Table 1.** Loading Factors of Sexting Motivation Items

Questions	Loading Factors		
	Sexual Purpose	Forced reason	Body Image
I do sexting to...			
seduce my partner sexually	0,896		
increase sexual arousal in my relationship	0,893		
get pleasure from others	0,858		
get sexually stimulated	0,851		
see if I am sexually attractive	0,743		
make sure that my body is sexy	0,683		
get money or gifts		0,944	
exchanged for something I need		0,892	
forced by others		0,441	
see if I am attractive enough to others			0,887
always feel the needed partner			0,782

### 2.3 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) to explore age and sex trends in sexting motivation. Before conducting the analysis, the researcher ensured that only instruments with complete answers were eligible. Next, the researchers screened the data to ensure normal distribution. The presentation of age and duration data using SNSs is presented based on each gender. Multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) to explore each factor's mean and standard deviation and compare by gender also includes factors that influence sexting behavior in respondents who report sexting behavior.

## 3 Result

### 3.1 Participant Background

Research questionnaires were distributed through social media Twitter and filled out entirely by 181 respondents. Of 181 respondents, 82% of respondents are female, and 18% are male. Of the respondents, 32% are 15 years old, 23.3% are 16 years old, 19.3%

are 17, 17.1% are 18, and 8.3% are 19. All respondents are teenagers who are high school students and the equivalent.

When viewed from the location of their residence, the respondents came from several regions in Indonesia, including Greater Jakarta 11%, West Java 15%, Central Java 11%, Yogyakarta 4%, East Java 50%, Sumatra 5%, Bali 3%, Sulawesi 2%, Borneo 2%, and Papua 1%. Table 2 shows that the use of SNS among adolescents is very diverse in addition to seeking lesson information. The highest duration is 5-7 hours per day, the second duration is 2-4 hours per day, and the third rank is the use of SNS with a duration of 8-12 hours per day.

### 3.2 Sexting Behavior Among Participant

The respondents stated the instrument by answering questions to categorize sexting behavior and whether they wanted to do sexting in the last three months. The results show that 88% of respondents have never had sexting, and 12% answered that they had had sexting in the last three months. Based on gender, 27% of respondents who did sexting were male, and 73% were female. The participants answered variously about the age at which they first sexted. Some answered 15 years and 16 years but most answered 18 years. Those who answered when they were 18 acknowledged that they were waiting for that age to be free from the rules of child pornography, and they were eagerly waiting for that age to come.

Respondents said that most of them started sexting because of an invitation from their partner, then the second largest answer was by friends because they happened to have a good body, and the least answer was that they first started sexting with strangers. Boyfriend strongly influences sexting because there is a sense of wanting to love, share affection, and show affection. Although they also realized that their boyfriend had left them, even though the respondents never refused their sexting requests.

Friends are people who also ask for sexting. Friends usually try to ask for sexting in a joking style, just looking for luck. However, because the perpetrator also desires, he is finally tempted by the friend's invitation. Strangers who just met on SNSs are also people who often trigger sexting. Respondents realized that sexting with friends or strangers carries the risk of being abandoned once the flirt's desire has disappeared. This behavior they call 'ghosting.'

Sexual desire, desire for affection, and financial problems are the things that can make female respondents continue to do sexting to this day. They say that sexual desire is the most significant driving force in sexting, especially when a certain period approaches menstruation. They feel their sexual arousal peaks and want to have sexting activities. For male respondents, financial reasons are not a trigger factor for sexting because they often have to spend money to enjoy sexting women who need financial assistance. The main reason for these young people is the need for sexual desire and fulfillment of affection which they cannot get from family or friends. They are delighted when there are women who want to have sexting even though they have to lose.

Respondents have some concerns when sexting with strangers, for example, strangers who do not meet their expectations from a physical point of view, how to mistreat them, or the spread of their sexting content. However, they feel safe if they are

Careful, for example, by providing conditions such as asking for a photo, asking to be sent an email, or bank transfer to withhold the identity of the money sender. Male respondents are usually more modest in choosing strangers, seeing if the target gets angry in their posts or quickly spills private messages to ensure they will be safe to start flirting with their target.

### 3.3 Factor that Encourages Sexting Behavior

A total of eleven question items with 5-item Likert scale answer choices were given to identify factors that encourage respondents to do sexting. An analysis of the percentage frequency of the three aspects of sexting motivation was conducted for descriptive purposes. Multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) to explore age and sex trends in sexting motivation, as presented in Table 3.

Table 3 shows that at the age of 15-18 years, the highest mean is in the aspect of body image, followed by sexual goals, while at the age of 19, the highest mean is in the aspect of sexual purpose, followed by compulsion. When viewed in terms of gender, male respondents showed the highest mean on body image, followed by compulsion. For female respondents, what is the highest mean in the aspect of body image and followed by sexual goals?

Most female respondents still in school feel that their sexting behavior does not interfere with their schoolwork because they usually prioritize doing work before opening SNS for fun. Most of them surf using SNS to pass the time after completing the task but do not feel sleepy yet, but the sleepiness does not come until late at night. However, some female respondents also felt that sexting interfered with schoolwork because they felt it was the best way out of a bad mood or many problems.

**Table 2.** Comparison of Age and Duration of Daily SNS Use

Questions	Woman (n=148)		Man (n=33)	
	%	n	%	n
Age				
15	31	46	36	12
16	25	37	15	5
17	22	33	6	2
18	15	22	28	9
19	7	10	15	5
Duration Using SNSs				
0-1 hour	1	2	3	1
2-4 hours	23	34	27	9
5-7 hours	48	70	45	15
8-12 hours	23	34	25	8
13-16 hours	5	7	0	0

**Table 3.** The Mean and Standard Deviation for the Motivational Aspect of Sexting

Test Criteria	Sexual Purposes <i>m</i> (SD)	Pressure <i>m</i> (SD)	Body Image <i>m</i> (SD)
Ages			
15	1,5 (0,58)	1,8 (1,1)	2,5 (1,9)
16	1,54 (0,76)	1,33 (0,66)	2,63 (0,63)
17	1	3	4
18	2,4 (1,23)	1,85 (0,92)	3,2 (1,65)
19	2,6 (1,5)	1,78 (0,76)	1,3 (0,29)
Gender			
Man	2,06 (0,85)	2,29 (0,93)	2,68 (1,16)
Woman	2 (1,16)	1,55 (0,86)	2,64 (1,42)

Male respondents said different things. They said that they often do academic procrastination and sexting because they feel more fun than doing assignments whose material they often do not understand. Male respondents admitted that the time to do sexting is speedy, either with a girlfriend, friend, or stranger, and sometimes doing this activity with more than one person, so the time it takes is also long. It has neglected his schoolwork. However, some respondents stated that they already had a particular schedule for schoolwork so that sexting activities did not interfere with completing school assignments.

### 3.4 Impact of Sexting on Continued Sexual Behavior

Both male and female respondents admitted that this sexting encouraged the desire to have more sex, whether when they did it with a boyfriend, a stranger, or a friend. When they do sexting, they usually masturbate and feel challenged to have other sexual experiences.

Sex offenders who want more sexual activity usually take advantage of hotel services for hugs, foreplay, and intimate relationships. They admit they are willing to share it so their wishes can come true. However, the perpetrators are reluctant to share the bill with those whose orientation is to get additional funds from sexting activities. Respondents who stated that they did not want to pursue sexual behavior more deeply admitted that they were afraid to try because they had the principle of maintaining their virginity until marriage.

### 3.5 Desire to Stop Sexting

The respondents who did sexting got additional questions, which included the desire to stop sexting, the difficulties encountered when wanting to stop sexting, and what things could make them avoid sexting. The respondents responded that 59% wanted to stop sexting, 32% said they were unsure, and 9% said they did not want to stop sexting. When asked about the difficulties they encountered when trying to stop sexting, 68% answered an inner urge, 23% answered an urgent financial need, and 9% stated that

there was a threat from another party. The last question explores what the respondents think can make them stop sexting; the respondents answered that self-control is the best way to avoid sexting, 82% of respondents, while the remaining 18% stated that remembering religion or spirituality could be a way to avoid sexting. Table 4 presents answers about the desire to stop sexting.

**Table 4.** Desire to stop Sexting

Questions	Woman	(n=14)	Man	(n=6)
	%	n	%	n
Desire to Stop Sexting				
Yes	57	8	66	4
Not	14	2	-	-
Doubtful	29	4	34	2
Difficulties encountered when trying to stop sexting				
Physical need	64	9	83	5
Financial need	29	4	17	1
Pressure from other	7	1	-	-
The thing that makes you able to avoid sexting				
Self-control	86	12	66	4
Religion/Spirituality	14	2	34	2
School counselor		-		-
Psychologist		-		-
Parental help		-		-

## 4 Discussion

The survey results show the tendency of teenagers to be tempted to do sexting, although the number is relatively low. Respondents who have had sexting stated that the reason for doing so was because they were looking for confidence in their body image, namely wanting to show that their body has an attraction for their sexting partner. In addition, the reason for sexual needs is the second aspect that affects their sexting behavior. This result correlates with previous research that body image is related to sexting behavior [18]. Respondents aged 19 years had different answers. They chose the reasons for channeling sexual desire and compulsion, and financial gain as their reasons for sexting. This finding is linear to previous studies, which stated that the fulfillment of affection is the main thing teenagers want in their sexual behavior [11, 14, 16]. These teenagers feel they do not get affection from the natural environment, so they seek affection through flirting and sexting behavior with others [2].

This sexting behavior, when viewed from the positive side of the sexual approach, is not problematic because it can improve the welfare of the perpetrator. However, from the community's perspective, sexting is a risky and destructive behavior [13] Sexting can be risky because it creates a desire to carry out other, more intimate sexual activities, so there is a risk of experiencing sexual violence [7]. Create a desire to have sexual



activity with multiple partners, with strangers, even if only to fulfill desires and financial fulfillment [3], including the possibility of unwanted pregnancies and bullying because the recipient can forward without consent [31]. Although it looks like a double standard, the negative impacts that arise from sexting above can be reduced by doing safer sexting or even avoiding sexting behavior [12].

This study also concludes that teenagers consider the help of others, such as school counselors or psychologists, as not an option that can help them stop sexting. These teens are more concerned with their self-control than professional help. The implications for counselors in schools, instead of wanting to help individuals stop sexting one by one, it would be better if counselors provide preventive services to more students regarding self-control in dealing with negative temptations from the development of SNSs and their relationships.

Although the concept of developing self-control is still too broad, several previous studies have shown that self-control skills can improve the ability to avoid sexting. Fostering self-control can be done by teaching adolescents how to make decisions that consider long-term strengths and weaknesses [23] and teach to develop subjective norms that are more effective in avoiding sexting [34].

## **5 Conclusion**

The research findings show that teenagers have the intention to do sexting. Sexting behaviors include gaining self-confidence from body image, increasing intimacy with partners like adults, and meeting financial needs that correlate with previous research. These findings can be considered in line with prior research that body image self-consciousness can reduce sexual agency, both offline and online [8]. Teenagers often carry in sexting behavior worldwide as a form of intimate communication between actors [33]. Sexter respondents said self-control and religion or spirituality could stop them from sexting. Furthermore, school counselors can help teenagers how to meet psychological well-being, understand the physical and hormonal changes in adolescence, and understand how sexual control is associated with the demands of social interaction. Self-control can be a significant help so adolescents can fully control themselves [15].

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