



NEW ADDICTIONS, NEW RISKS: Sexting behaviours as a result of Internet Addiction

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Introduction

- The use of information and communication technologies has improved the relationship between people. However empirical evidence shows an increased addiction to social networks and internet for adolescents (Müller et al., 2016).
- Internet addiction has been associated with sexting by young people (Ricketts, Maloney, Marcum & Higgins, 2015) and social anxiety (Weinstein et al., 2015).
- Sexting refers to sending and/or receiving of sexually suggestive or explicit images from one cell phone to another (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010) and it has been related to negative psychosocial consequences (Reyns, Burek, Henson, & Fisher, 2013).

Aims

The aims of this study are to test if internet addiction predicts sexting behaviours (Hypothesis 1) as well as to determine if social physical anxiety plays an important role in such relation (Hypothesis 2).

Method

335 Spanish adolescents answered a set of questionnaires (age M=15.10, SD= 0.95) (141 men and 194 women).

Instruments:

- Social Physical Anxiety Scale (SPAS-7) (Sáenz-Álvarez, et al., 2013) $\alpha = 0.85$
- The Scale of risk of addiction to social networks and Internet for adolescents (ERA-RSI) (Hernández et al., 2018) $\alpha = 0.86$
- Scale about Sexting Behaviours (ECS) (Chacón-López et al., 2016) $\alpha = 0.92$



Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

Higher addiction to internet and social networks is related to higher sexting behaviours

Hypothesis 2

An increased addiction to internet and social network indirectly impacted the sexting behaviour through physical social anxiety

Results

Table 1: Correlation among variables

	1	2
1. Addiction to social network & Internet	--	
2. Social Physical Anxiety	0.31***	--
3. Sexting Behaviours	0.46***	0.02

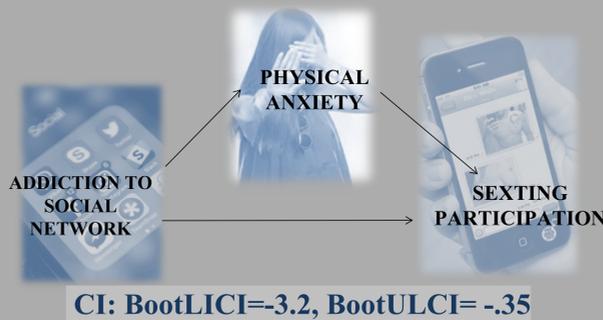


Figure 1: Mediation Model

Table 2: Regression coefficients. Standard Error

	Social Physical Anxiety			Sexting Behaviours		
	Coeff.	SE	p	Coeff.	SE	p
Addiction to social network & Internet	0.76	0.13	<.001	17.44	1.74	<.001
Social Physical Anxiety				-1.95	0.71	<.01
	F(3, 333)= 35.90, p<.001			F(3, 332)= 50.36, p<.001		

Conclusions

The results showed that sexting behaviours are related to higher internet and social network addiction. Moreover, this relation is explained through physical social anxiety. These results show that those adolescents who feel ashamed and uncomfortable at social offline interactions might feel safe in social networks, which might create a dependence to the internet, leading them to behave in a riskier manner than if they were in face to face interactions.

Bibliography

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