

Problematic Texting Behavior: A Look at Individual Differences

Bradford L. Schroeder

University of Central Florida, schroeder@knights.ucf.edu

Valerie K. Sims

University of Central Florida, valerie.sims@ucf.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://commons.erau.edu/hfap>



Part of the [Other Psychology Commons](#)

Schroeder, Bradford L. and Sims, Valerie K., "Problematic Texting Behavior: A Look at Individual Differences" (2016). *Human Factors and Applied Psychology Student Conference*. 8.
<https://commons.erau.edu/hfap/hfap-2015/posters/8>

This Poster is brought to you for free and open access by the Human Factors and Applied Psychology Student Conference at Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Human Factors and Applied Psychology Student Conference by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact commons@erau.edu.

Problematic Texting Behavior: A Look at Individual Differences

Bradford L. Schroeder & Valerie K. Sims

University of Central Florida

Text messaging (“texting”) is a communicative social behavior which is the most preferred form of social interaction among young adults (e.g., Harley et al., 2007; Haste, 2005; Lister, 2010; Sierkowski & Wood, 2011). Perhaps the greatest appeal of texting is its convenience – it is easily possible to communicate with anyone, regardless of either party’s location. However, the convenience of texting has opened a door to an important safety issue: texting while driving. The context of safety has been a prime focus for much of the recent research on texting (e.g., Drews, Yazdani, Godfrey, Cooper, & Strayer, 2009), but less attention has been focused on the consequences of other kinds of problematic texting. Although the safety implications of texting and driving are apparent, other texting behaviors may lead to adverse social, physical, health, or interpersonal consequences. Due to these potential effects, there is a need for other types of problematic texting to be better researched. In this study, we examined a variety of problematic texting behaviors in addition to those related to texting and driving, and analyzed them in the context of individual differences such as personality, need for cognition, and age. Previous work has minimally examined texting and individual differences, and because of this, the present findings are largely exploratory in nature. We argue that, to better understand a common and complex behavior such as texting, the relationships among texting behaviors and individual differences must be explored. Because young adults aged 18-25 tend to text most frequently (Ling, 2010), we surveyed 242 (55% female) undergraduate college students’ texting habits. In addition, we collected their responses to examine individual differences in age, gender, personality, and need for cognition. Generally, age showed a negative association with most of the problematic texting habits we measured, most notably texting in class, texting while walking, and texting to cheat on assignments. As compared to females, males tended to report higher rates of texting when in their vehicle (but not while driving), when bored, to send sexual messages (“sexting”), or to threaten others. Extraversion was generally positively associated with texting while driving, and neuroticism was positively associated with various socially problematic texting behaviors (such as during face-to-face conversations). These two dimensions of personality have been shown to be related to the types of text messages people send (Holtgraves, 2014). Need for cognition was negatively associated with a majority of the socially problematic texting behaviors we examined. Given that texting is more than just a social behavior, this study extends the previous research on texting with a look at less well-researched texting behaviors from an individual differences perspective. In addition to individual differences, these behaviors were examined in terms of participant endorsement rate. Participants showed high endorsement rates for dangerous behaviors, such as texting in the car when in traffic (65%), or while walking alone (89%). Further results and implications for human factors and future research are discussed.