

Ways to Come Out from Phubbing: A Social Allergen and a Digital Disease

Bisma Farooq Sheikh^{1*}, Foziya Farooq²

ABSTRACT

Smartphone usage especially among adolescents and young adults has increased drastically and this popularization of smartphones and internet addiction have led to a digital disease called Phubbing. It is the act of snubbing or ignoring interlocutors by looking at phone instead of paying attention to them. People who phub (often called “phubbers”) Glance at their phones in the middle of a conversation, keep Checking their phones when the conversation stalls, keep their phone close by even during in -person interactions and interrupt a real-life conversation to attend phone calls. They are unmindful of cell phone etiquettes. The addiction is due to FOMO (fear of missing out), emotional dependence. They don’t want to miss a single update or text as every pop up raises their dopamine levels which make them feel good. It is high time that we realise the detrimental consequences of digital diseases and start rejuvenating our social relations and interactions. Many times, it is the root cause of conflict as our loved ones feel ignored, ostricized and unwanted due to our immersion in e world. It is in this backdrop that the present study was carried to highlight the causes, ramifications and remedies for phubbing suggested by Cyber psychologists, researchers and social scientists.

Keywords: *Digital detox. FOMO, Nomophobia, Mindful, Phubbing*

A widespread digital disease which has emerged from internet addiction and dependency is phubbing. The term Phubbing is a combination of two words: “phone” and “snubbing.” The term was coined in 2012 as a part of campaign launched by Adrian Mills; the director of advertising agency McCann Group who invited lexicographers, authors, and poets to suggest a new word to describe the behavior of ignoring others in favor of mobile phone. Alex High-an intern at Macc cann came up with the word “Phubbing”. Subsequently Mc Cann Group launched No phubbing campaign to raise awareness of the issue. Thus “Phubbing is the act of snubbing someone in a social setting by looking at your smartphone instead of paying attention”. Chotpitayasunondh and Douglas (2018) It is the action of ignoring someone or multiple people during social events and using smartphones, to check or use Facebook, WhatsApp or other social media applications” Nazir and Piskin (2016) “It is a kind of social exclusion and interpersonal neglect and is used to indicate the

¹Research scholar Dept of psychology, University of Kashmir

²Lecturer on academic arrangement, JK higher education

*Corresponding Author

Received: February 15, 2023; Revision Received: February 18, 2023; Accepted: February 20, 2023

Ways to Come Out from Phubbing: A Social Allergen and a Digital Disease

interruptions in social relationships caused by mobile phone usage” Roberts and David (2017). They keep entertaining themselves by Scrolling through their social media feed,, Posting a selfie or photo of their meal or activity ,Texting other people or Playing online games. Although phubbing seems like a relatively harmless but annoying part of modern digital life, research shows that it is detrimental to our relationships. the person who is phubbed feels that the phubber doesn’t care enough to focus and pay attention to him. Even if the phubber is posting photos of what they’re doing with the other person, their involvement with the phone distracts from real-life interaction. Thus, phubbing is one example of how technology is at war with human interaction. Emma Seppälä, a psychologist at Stanford and Yale universities and author of “the *happiness tracks*” Says “Although phubbing connects you, presumably, with someone through social media or texting, but it actually can severely disrupt your present-moment, in-person relationships.” Other study on phubbing found that phubbing threaten four “fundamental needs” — belongingness, self-esteem, meaningful existence and control by making phubbed people feel excluded and ostracized.” . There are important ramifications as a result of individuals not focusing about interlocutors and instead paying attention to their phone. Shelly Turkler in her famous book “*Alone together: Why we expect more from technology and less from people* has expressed her serious concern over the wild fire of internet addiction and phubbing that has affected the social fabric and ethos; parents, spouses and friends feel disconnected and devalued; we are all in this race; we are both the victims and convicts of phubbing ; she has presented many case studies where people value and cherish technology and e communications more than in person interactions; many divorces are the resultant of the phubbing behaviour of their spouses; as when they come back from work and seek company and quality time and attention of their spouses they feel ostracized and neglected as the spouse remain busy in e world and less interested in what the spouse is saying thereby escalating jealousy, misunderstandings and marital discord.

LITERATURE REVIEW

People admit that they phub others and empathetically denounce it as disrespectful and hurtful; however, they still unintentionally engage in it and this is known as digital akrasia that is the tendency to become swept up by ones digital devices inspite of better intentions (Aagaard J,2020). Donell & Sagaf (2019) conducted a systematic review and found that phubbing heighten the feelings of jealousy between romantic partners, weakens their bond, lowers their relationship satisfaction and increases their depressive symptoms as Phubbing is perceived as rude, offensive, and a violation of social norms. It undermines perceptions of empathetic concern, closeness, interpersonal trust, and conversation quality. It negatively affects their social health, relationship health, and self-flourishing, The most important predictors associated with phubbers were Internet addiction, smartphone addiction, fear of missing out, and the lack of self-control. phubbing behavior negatively affect satisfaction and fulfillment obtained from the relationship between partners (A´ gual, Patraõo, & Leal, 2018; Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas, 2018a; Gonza´lezRivera, Segura-Abreu, & Urbistondo-Rodri´guez, 2018; Knoll, Corso, & Junior, 2017; Krasnova, Abramova, Notter, & Baumann, 2016; Vanden Abeele, Antheunis, & Schouten, 2016). Another negative effect of phubbing is reported in work life. Employees who stated that bosses paid attention to their phones during communication said they felt the work they did was not valued and selfconfidence about efficacy related to work reduced (David & Roberts, 2017). It is understood from studies that there are negative reflections of phubbing in educational life just as in family and work life. Abramova, Baumann, Krasnova, and Lessman (2017) determined that phubbing cause distraction in class. Chasombat (2015) identified that those displaying phubbing behavior had reduced listening skills. Since neurotic individuals are isolated in their relations (Schermer & Martin, 2019), they may want to compromise their loneliness through the Internet and games

Ways to Come Out from Phubbing: A Social Allergen and a Digital Disease

through which they can access the smartphone. it restricts participation in recreational and meaningful activities (Farouqi, 2018). In another study Misra et al. (2016) revealed that conversations in which smartphones were present reported lower levels of empathic concern compared to those in the absence of a smartphone at the table. The effects of phubbing can create negative and resentful reactions so that people feel less close to the interaction partner when there is a telephone present and deflated mood (Roberts and David, 2016).

Remedies

Cyberpsychologists, researchers, clinicians and educators all are widely concerned about controlling the wild wire of internet addiction in general and phubbing in particular as the fabric of social ethos and essence of social relationships is degrading; gap is widening between parent and child; husband and wife; and among peers ; relationship of trust , need satisfaction and emotional support have become rare .According to a psychologist ; Timothy Jay(2018) urge to check phones has become more stronger than urge to sex among modern people; they are unable to refrain themselves from using phones during meals and interactions ; Some research based strategies for controlling phubbing behaviours are listed below:

1. **Using data limit apps like Detox:** we should install data usage monitoring apps and set a detox limit; and that would signal us about the amount of time we have used internet and that makes an individual feel guilty of having wasted the time; many detox apps disable social networks for some period once we reach the limit.
2. **Keeping phone in dark mode:** we get attracted by the tempting screens of our phone and in light mode people enjoy watching videos and chit chatting; however keeping phones in dark mode make phones less appealing and protect our eyes from side effects.
3. **Disabling notifications for social media apps:** we should disable notifications of social media apps like WhatsApp Facebook, Instagram etc.: as every incoming text and pop up make us curious and Impulsive to check and respond; therefore, we should check our social media apps only at intervals and not frequently.
4. Keeping mobile data off when not needed:
5. **Mindful use of smartphones:** content one world will never end; be that related to entertainment, knowledge, self-care and shopping; so, we need to be mindful about our cyberdiet; what we chose to watch and stop scrolling and clicking on irrelevant posts and videos.
6. **Rejuvenating social relations:** we should make it a norm to sideline the phones during in person interactions with family or colleagues that would make our loved ones feel valued and appreciated; this would rejuvenate our social relationships; we should arrange family fun activities in our homes.
7. **Keeping phone in drawers or lockers during work:** while doing work we should keep phones away from ourselves; and use laptops instead as that is not as tempting as phones.
8. Strengthening self control
9. Channelising energy in outdoor recreational activities or healthy hobbies.
10. Deactivating social media accounts on weekends and vacations

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Modern people are more concerned about missing a tweet, Facebook post or call than about hurting the feelings of their loved ones. They are less interested in offline and real time conversations and more involved in e world. Employers show less interest in what the employee is saying; adolescent show less interest in what the parent is saying and the

Ways to Come Out from Phubbing: A Social Allergen and a Digital Disease

husband shows less interest in what the wife is saying; parents are neglecting their children; homes have become mobile zones; interactions among family members are missing and even guests are phubbed; making them feel guilty about choosing to come. While leaving home people feel like having lost a limb If they realise they have forgot to bring mobile phone. But the good news is that phubbing is a learned behavior and can be unlearned. Some of the solutions presented by researchers and psychologists are making bedrooms and meal time a no mobile zone; challenging ourselves that we can go phone free for an hour and then increasing the time span; developing new healthy and lively habits and hobbies; spending quality time with family and friends; Working on building impulse control; as that would build self esteem; enhance productivity and improve quality of our social interactions and relations.

Limitations and suggestions for future research

This is a review-based study. Future researches should be done on the topic by using various quantitative and qualitative research methods. There is a high need of collaborative intervention-based research in the arena. Future researchers should study the nuances of phubbing including personality factors; risk and protective factors and the ramifications beyond short term.

REFERENCES

- Aagaard J (2020) Digital akrasia: a qualitative study of phubbing. *AI & society* 35(1),237-244
- Sagaf & Donnell (2019). Phubbing: Perceptions, reasons behind, predictors, and impacts. *Wiley*
- Notara& Lagiou. The Emerging Phenomenon of Nomophobia in young adults:A Systematic Review study. *Addiction & Health*.
- Kumar R, Kumari S & Sharma (2021). Nomophobia: A rising Concern among Indian students. *Industrial Psychiatry Journal*
- Gariado (2021). *A descriptive literature review of phubbing behaviours*. Elsevier

Acknowledgement

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Sheikh, B. F. & Farooq, F. (2023). Ways to Come Out from Phubbing: A Social Allergen and a Digital Disease. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 11(1), 810-813. DIP:18.01.083.20231101, DOI:10.25215/1101.083