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Phubbing – A Growing Trend among Youth

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ABSTRACT

Present study titled 'Phubbing – A growing trend among youth.' was conducted on male and female undergraduate students. Descriptive survey method was implied to collect the data of the study. 200 students have been selected by using stratified random sampling technique as a sample of the study. Based on the literature overview and discussion with the subject experts and to bring fair evaluation report, self devised questionnaire was constructed and validated containing four dimensions of phubbing behavior namely Individual acceptance, smart phone separation anxiety, relational divergence and identity detachment where respondents had indicated their responses on a scale of 7 points. Descriptive statistics (mean and percentage analysis) have been used for analyzing and interpreting the data and its finding are conducted as there is a presence of phubbing behaviour among males and females of undergraduates of Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture, Technology and Sciences and University of Allahabad. Our findings have implications for clinical/ organizational practitioners including smartphone producers, mobile app providers and other affiliated stakeholders.

Key Words : Phubbing, Smartphone

INTRODUCTION

The foundation of word phubbing is accredited to an initiative started by McCann Melbourne company back in 2012. The company invited various expect lexicographers and psychologists to observe this behaviour of ignoring someone completely while self getting engaged into some electronic gadgets with or without internet services and eventually devising a neologism that explains this behaviour. It was McCann Accounts director Mr. Adrian Mills who coined the term phubbing. The behaviour was popularized by media reports under the banner – "Stop Phubbing Campaign". The process may seem to be relatively harmless, might be annoying part of our modern lifestyle but researchers have proven that such behaviour of snubbing others not only affects our relationships but also our innate nature. Prolonged involvement in such behaviour has experimentally proven to be addictive or habitual for an individual. On the modern lines of development, youth is so fascinated by new technological aids that it is missing out on the charm and warmth of human interactions. An interesting paradox is that these modern technological aids (like smart phones) were meant to be a device that will assist individuals to be in touch with their family and friends; if not physically, it could be over texts, mails or social media platforms. However, it is disheartening to see the trend is not only limited to grownups moved to different cities (away from their dear ones) but not seeping into school / college attending young men and women. Studies indicate that mere presence of such a gadget during a face to face conversation made people feel less involved with each other. The mobile phone user is socially and mentally in another place instead of 'in' the immediate face-to-face conversation (Katz and Aakhus, 2002). There are various causes for such behaviour such as staying all alone with the thought process during a conversation is extremely difficult. Hence, they look for alternative modes of

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venting out their thoughts. As a behavior that occurs regularly, phubbing should be at the forefront of any efforts to understand how cell phone use impacts romantic relationships (Roberts and David, 2016). Also, internet has opened doors to various sources of information and enhanced our unnecessary inquisition levels–an unwanting desire to know anything and everything without looking into its immediate utility or benefits. Phubbing was also found to threaten out fundamental needs like belongingness, self esteem, self control and meaningful existence (Chotpitayasunondh, 2018). The present study elaborates on existence of phubbing behaviour among undergraduate males and females. A strong connection between phubbing and online addiction behaviours. Indeed, future online services should aim at avoiding the emergence of psychological detrimental issues like phubbing and therefore promoting well-being among Internet users (Guazzini *et al.,* 2019)

METHODOLOGY

In the present study descriptive survey method was used to collect data. The study is confined to all undergraduate students of Allahabad. Sample selected for this study are undergraduate students of sciences and social sciences stream of Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture, Technology and Science (SHUATS) and University of Allahabad. Sample size chosen is 200 undergraduate students of both sexes from Science Steam (46 boys and 40 girls) and Social Science Stream (54 boys and 60 girls) by stratified random sampling method. Based on the literature overview and discussion with the subject experts and to bring fair evaluation report, self devised questionnaire was constructed and validated containing four dimensions of phubbing behavior namely Individual acceptance, smart phone separation anxiety, relational divergence and identity detachment where respondents had indicated their responses on a scale of 7 points. To make the study more effective few items were also prepared like Do you prefer social media over personalised meeting? Do you check your phone even if it didn't beep or ring? Do you always need to have all of the latest app updates right away? How many hours a day you are spending on your cell phones? Do you treat your phone as person by taking extra care of it? Your vacation spot does not have cellular service. Do you still go on vacation? The data was statistically analysed using mean and percentage analysis.

Objective:

To study the phubbing behaviour among undergraduate students.

Hypothesis:

There is phubbing behaviour among undergraduate students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to evaluate the existence of phubbing behavior among undergraduate males and females, mean was computed and result of the analysis was given in the Table 1.

Table 1: Estimate of parameters of phubbing in comparison to normal ranges

Variable	Calculated mean	Normal range
Individual acceptance	14.11	below 12
Smartphone separation anxiety	17.27	below16
Relational divergence	18.53	below 16
Identity detachment	18.57	below 16
Overall phubbing	68.51	below 60

The recorded values computed from the collected data clearly states that phubbing behavior strongly exists in the undergraduate students. The calculated mean of all components of phubbing behavior like Individual acceptance, smart phone separation anxiety, relational divergence and identity detachment show considerable deviation from their normal ranges with the values of 14.11, 17.27, 18.53 and 18.57. Hence, overall phubbing behaviour among undergraduate students explicitly stands out with the value of 68.51 which is more than the normal range (60). Although the values indicate small variation from normal range but it will be noticeable to mark its growing levels as time passes by. The need based involvement with the phone expects marked increase in the phubbing nature of young men and women. The graphical representation of variation in means of all the dimensions of phubbing is shown in Fig. 1.

Fig. 1 clearly states the existence of phubbing behaviour among undergraduate students. All components of phubbing *i.e.* Smartphone separation anxiety, Relational divergence, Identity detachment and Individual acceptance show considerable elevation in reference to normal ranges. The probable reason for this could be the

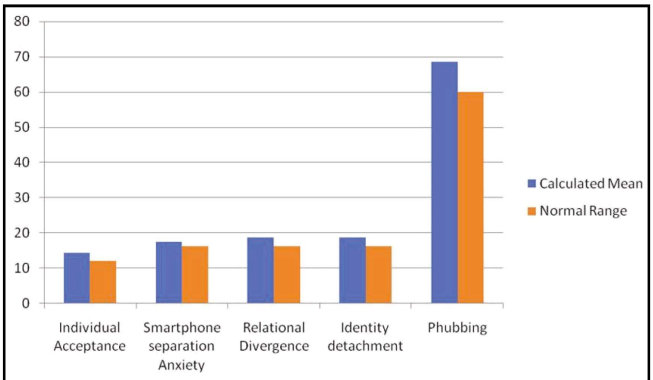

Fig. 1 : Phubbing behaviour in undergraduate students

involvement of youth in the virtual world. Modern ways of technology has helped all of us to stay connected at all times. However, its misuse or we may say its overuse has resulted in phubbing. It was interesting to see that similar results were achieved by Davey *et al.* (2018). Their study was conducted on sample size of 400 adults and they observed steady increase in the phubbing behaviour as well as other personality traits. Also, according to the study conducted by Fritz (2018), it was emphasized that phubbing is not a universal consequence of today's omnipresence of smart phones, but varies among individuals, more specifically, emerging adults. With this thread, it was anticipated to see if phubbing behaviour varies among different genders or students pursuing different academic streams or their individual take on their relationship with their phones.

While reviewing the reported responses, it was amazingly noticed that individual components of phubbing show invariable difference between undergraduate students of sciences and social sciences. Review is shared in the Table 2.

It was observed that percentage of undergraduate males and females across both the considered streams experiencing Smartphone separation anxiety is more than 50% which indicates an alarming rise in smartphone separation anxiety. Also, achieved value for Relational divergence, Identity detachment and Individual acceptance for sciences were 65.11%, 58.13% and 60.46%, respectively whereas parameters of Relational divergence, Identity detachment and Individual acceptance for social sciences were 73.68%, 71.92% and 68.42%, respectively. However, it was of great inspection that overall phubbing behaviour in social sciences (63.15%) is at the forefront when compared to undergraduate students of science stream (55.81%). Apparently, this observation could be due to higher involvement of students in quest of artistic skill enhancement unlike students of science stream. A remarkable increase can be seen in Relational divergence of students of social sciences with 73.68% which implies to their relational divergence or individual inconsistency of thoughts, feelings, emotions and / may be of relationships with different people. Likewise, there is 71.92% of students who experience identity detachment in the form of Identity detachment. This detachment can be indicative of indirect phubbing behaviour which will constantly show a steep rise in upcoming time. A review of the achieved starts is open for further research.

An analogous evaluation indicated diversity in achieved scores of males and females across streams while making an allowance for diverse components of exhibiting phubbing behaviour and their evident expression. Table 3 indicates percentage of each component of phubbing behaviour in male and female undergraduates.

It was observed that percentage of undergraduate males and females across both the considered streams exhibiting phubbing behaviour is more than 50% which indicates an alarming rise in disruptive mental health parameters like anxiety or inability to cope with real relationships. Also, achieved value for Smartphone separation anxiety, Relational divergence, Identity detachment and Individual acceptance for males were 46%, 70%, 62% and 58%, respectively whereas parameters of Smartphone separation anxiety, Relational

Table 2 : Phubbing behaviour in undergraduates of sciences and social sciences

Components	Sciences (N = 86)		Social Sciences (N = 114)	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Individual Acceptance	52	60.46%	78	68.42%
Smartphone separation Anxiety	45	52.32%	66	57.89%
Relational Divergence	56	65.11%	84	73.68%
Identity detachment	50	58.13%	82	71.92%
Overall Phubbing	48	55.81%	72	63.15%

Table 3 : Phubbing behaviour in male and female undergraduates

Components	Males (N=100)		Females (N=100)	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Individual Acceptance	58	58%	72	72%
Smartphone separation Anxiety	46	46%	64	64%
Relational Divergence	70	70%	70	70%
Identity detachment	62	62%	70	70%
Overall Phubbing	52	52%	68	68%

divergence, Identity detachment and Individual acceptance for females were 64%, 70%, 70% and 72% correspondingly. However, it was scrutinized that overall phubbing behaviour in males (52%) is lagging far behind when compared to undergraduate females (68%). It sounds as if, this observation could be due to higher involvement of female students in societal relationships unlike undergraduate male students. A remarkable increase can be seen in Smartphone separation anxiety among undergraduate females with 64% which implies to their fear of missing out or character solitude of thoughts, feelings, emotions and may be of relationships with different people when compared to males (46%). Likewise, there are 72% of female students who experience high intimate affirmation in the form of Individual acceptance.

During the administration of phubbing tool on subjects, following questions were also asked to understand the nature of phubbing behaviour.

Questions	Response	Percentage
Do you prefer social media over personalised meeting?	Yes	63%
Do you check your phone even if it didn't beep or ring?	Yes	72%
Do you always need to have all of the latest app updates right away?	Yes	86%
How many hours a day you are spending on your cell phones?	> 1 hr	3%
	1 – 3 hrs	7%
	3 – 6 hrs	44%
	< 6 hrs	46%
Do you treat your phone as person by taking extra care of it?	Yes	33%
	No	67%
Your vacation spot does not have cellular service. Do you still go on vacation?	Yes	33%
	No	61%
	May be	06%

The response weightage at each query indicates the increasing levels of phubbing behaviour. It is also indicative of the fact that virtual world has now become youth's new home and they are more comfortable spending their time and energy in this technological world rather developing more real bonds in actual environment. They are more expressive when it comes to perform on a virtual platform instead having relationships in real. When the population of 200 undergraduates was asked if they preferred social media over personalized meeting, around 63% population was in favour of social media. They found social media platform more compatible over personalized meeting. Similarly, 72% of population showed anxious behaviour as they stated that they would turn up their attention towards their cellular phone if it no evident notification was alarmed off. An astonishing population of 90% spends more than 4 - 5 hours on phone use and around 86% of undergraduate students are very particular about keeping their phones updated with all latest applications to be put to immediate use. It was also noticeable that around 61% students clearly denied visiting any such place where they cannot use their cellular service. Their denial to such a query and increasing percentages towards amount of time invested shows the phubbing nature in undergraduate students.

Conclusion:

The aim of present study was to evaluate the nature and presence of phubbing behaviour in targeted undergraduates of Allahabad and also to bring forth the negative implications of phubbing among youth. This research brought some interesting empirical findings during course of study. Phubbing behavior strongly exists in the undergraduate students. The need based involvement with the phone expects marked increase in the phubbing nature of young men and women. All the components of phubbing *i.e.* Smartphone separation anxiety, Relational divergence, identity detachment and Individual acceptance show considerable elevation in reference to normal ranges. An astonishing population of 90% spends more than 4 - 5 hours on phone use and around 86% of undergraduate students are very particular

about keeping their phones updated with all latest applications to be put to immediate use. Around 63% population was in favour of social media and found social media platform more compatible over personalized meeting. It was of found that overall phubbing behaviour in social sciences (63.15%) is at the forefront when compared to undergraduate students of science stream (55.81%). Apparently, this observation could be due to higher involvement of students in quest of artistic skill enhancement unlike students of science stream. An analogous evaluation indicated diversity in achieved scores of males and females across streams while making an allowance for diverse components of exhibiting phubbing behaviour and their evident expression. It was scrutinized that overall phubbing behaviour in males (52%) is lagging far behind when compared to undergraduate females (68%).

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