

Impact Of Parental Phubbing on Smartphone Usage, Relationship Assessment and Emotional Intelligence

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Abstract

The present study examined the impact of parental phubbing on smartphone usage, emotional intelligence and relationship assessments among students (N=302) from Sargodha. The study follows correlational research design. Students were selected by using purposive convenient sampling technique. In order to measure parental phubbing, smartphone usage, emotional intelligence and relationship assessments, parental phubbing Questionnaire (Roberts and David 2016), smartphone usage Questionnaire (Kwon et al. 2013), emotional intelligence Questionnaire (Law, Wong, & Song, 2004) and relationship assessment scale (Hendrick, 1988) has been used. Psychometric properties and descriptive statistics were determined to ensure the normality of sample. Correlation analysis depicted Parental phubbing is positively correlated with smartphone usage and negatively correlated with relationship assessment.

Key words: parental Phubbing, smartphone usage, relationship assessment, emotional intelligence

Introduction

The ineptitude towards controlling the use of the smartphone means that the user uses it uncontrollably interrupting their lives. It is not a disease about smartphone usage only; it is about losing control. An individual is likely to feel obliged to always check his or her phone even in a social situation, during dinner or in school, where this practice is inappropriate. This behavior might eventually lead to an obsession in which the individual resorts to using his/her phone even after understanding that it has adverse effects. This issue is evident among adolescents especially with special developmental peculiarities among this age group. At the adolescent stage, the brain is still changing a great deal particularly in the regions that deal with judgment, impulse, and emotional control. The prefrontal cortex which is responsible in self-control and rational thinking is not fully developed until the mid-20s. This often leaves the teenagers in a self-control crisis thus making it more strenuous not to succumb to the feeling of using their mobile phones. The current government pledges to offer more sustainable support and space (Roberts & David, 2016).

Also, teenagers need more stimulation of the senses as compared to adults. In order to be emotionally and intellectually satisfied, they seek new and complex things. The latter is best fulfilled in terms of using smartphones, which make social media, games, movies, and other immensely engaging digital information all instantly accessible. Each time the reward system of the brain is triggered by a notification, a like, comment, or message, a neurotransmitter related to pleasure and addiction, dopamine, is released. With the teen beginning to long after the feelings that come with smartphone use, such as repeated reinforcement patterns can, over time, lead to dependence. Also, smartphones serve as an important part of social adaptation by teenagers. When relationships with friends and

popularity are vital, smartphones are a tool that allows staying in touch with friends, keeping up with them and being different. There is peer pressure, social comparison, and FOMO which all lead one into excessive usage. Adolescents that do not constantly check their devices to see comments or updates may become isolated or even awkward (Roberts & David, 2016). Theoretical Framework Parental phubbing or a parent who disregards his or her child in order to focus on a smartphone is increasingly becoming recognized as another subtly harmful form of social neglect. This behavior may reduce the quality of communication between a parent and a child because the responsiveness and emotional availability required to promote a healthy attachment may be reduced. When children think that their parents are more interested in electronics rather than in them, they will grow to be emotionally detached, less trusting and not connected. These changes in the communication patterns may hinder the development of love, security, and familiarity between the parents and children. According to their own strength (McDaniel & Radesky, 2018).

Due to the undesirable effects produced on quality parent-child relationships, parental phubbing, i.e., a tendency to ignore the child in favour of using the smartphone, has become a parenting challenge of our age. Attachment theory refers to secure and responsive interactions as necessary in the emotional development of children. Parents who are always checking their smartphones will not be available to provide emotional support, and this might interfere with the desired developmental associations, i.e. the secure attachment established in the developmental years (Ainsworth, 1989; McDaniel & Radesky, 2018). These disruptions in parenting reflective patterns cause the evil of such neglect or emotional detachment, which eventually shapes the result of the child emotionally and behaviorally (Roberts & David, 2016). Emotional intelligence (EI) of children that involves self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and interpersonal skills is shaped mostly by the way their parents talk to them, and exemplify them. Emotional learning could also be affected through children observing parental phubbing whereby children are less likely to get verbal inputs and emotional expressions. Under the social learning hypothesis, children learn emotional responses and coping skills by observing significant individuals, and mainly the caregivers (Bandura, 1986). When parents give into smartphone addiction, not being attentive enough, it can restrict emotional intelligence development of a child, making them more susceptible to stresses, the feeling of isolation, and inability to control emotions. Those stories used to isolate them (Kildare & Middlemiss, 2017).

Finally, phubbing among parents is a source as well as an effect of overusing smartphones by parents. According to the displacement theory, additional screen time often replaces the face-to-face interactions, especially that in the family. (Katz, 2017). They may end up with an environment of emotional coldness when parents who are largely dependent on smartphones as work tools, or hobbies, or social validation, end up prioritising virtual interaction over face-to-face interaction. In this way, the habitual usage of smartphones becomes a mutually supportive behavior that negatively affects not only the emotional atmosphere required by the child to grow properly but also ruins the parental focus (Abels et al., 2021). Studies presented have depicted that parent smartphone behaviour, especially smarter or repetitive behaviour is a powerful forecaster of phubbing behaviour. There are high-frequency gadgets, which increase the possibility of causing techno Ference, a term coined to describe the influence of the technology in daily relationships. Such a steady attention leads to more phubbing, worsening the quality of parental presence, and communication. Lack of concentration or detachment might be displayed involuntarily by the parents, preoccupied with their digital lives, and with the impact on family dynamics and child development, such an approach might have in the long run. The Gowers and the Gowers Office have (Kildare & Middlemiss, 2017). The studies conducted reveal that the use of smartphones using phubbing is the direct result of smartphones overuse by parents. To illustrate, Wang et al. (2017) found a large correlation in the self-reported phubbing behavior and daily smartphone use among parents. The less parental attentiveness and emotional involvement with children were henceforth forecasted. Moreover, dependence on smartphones

among parents was identified as one of the leading factors in predicting careless parenting practices, in particular, during meal and family sessions, which is a vital setting in terms of building a relationship with the child (Hong et al., 2021).

Empirical Evidences

Evidence is building up to indicate the existence of a correlation between parental phubbing, emotional intelligence, parent child relationship and smart phone usage

Phubbing and Emotional Intelligence of parents

There is an emerging body of empirical evidence that strongly asserts that parental phubbing can lead to lower emotional intelligence in children. The parent-child interactions are significant when it comes to the enhancement of emotional intelligence including competencies such as emotional control, empathy, as well as interpersonal awareness. Xie and Xie (2020) found that, children who were phubbed by their parents were often rated as significantly worse off in their emotional intelligence. There were 710 primary school kids used in the study. This was attributed to the fact that, use of mobile phone by parents hinders emotional modeling and verbal communication. The researchers concluded that the ability of a child to understand and properly manage emotions is directly negatively impacted by the lack of attention of parents caused by the digital distraction.

Phubbing Parents and Smartphone Usage

It was also empirically confirmed that there is a strong correlation between the use of smartphones and phubbing by their parents. Abels et al., (2021) performed a very comprehensive systematic evaluation, comprising 36 peer-reviewed articles and reached the conclusion that excessive smartphone uses by parents significantly predicted parental phubbing. The review stated that parents who focused on phones were less responsive and emotionally engaged, especially in such bonding moments as when playing and when having a meal as a family. These activities were proved to disrupt family tie and increase detachment in children. Possibly, the evidence of Liu et al. (2022) supports the hypothesis that smartphone addiction makes parents phub more who, in turn, develops poor emotional intelligence in their kids. This research study evaluated 600 pairs of parent and children and found that phubbing was a mediator between emotional understanding of children and impression to smartphone addiction. The findings indicate how unintentional and continued use of cell phones by parents negatively affect the social and emotional development of a child as well as frustrating relationships.

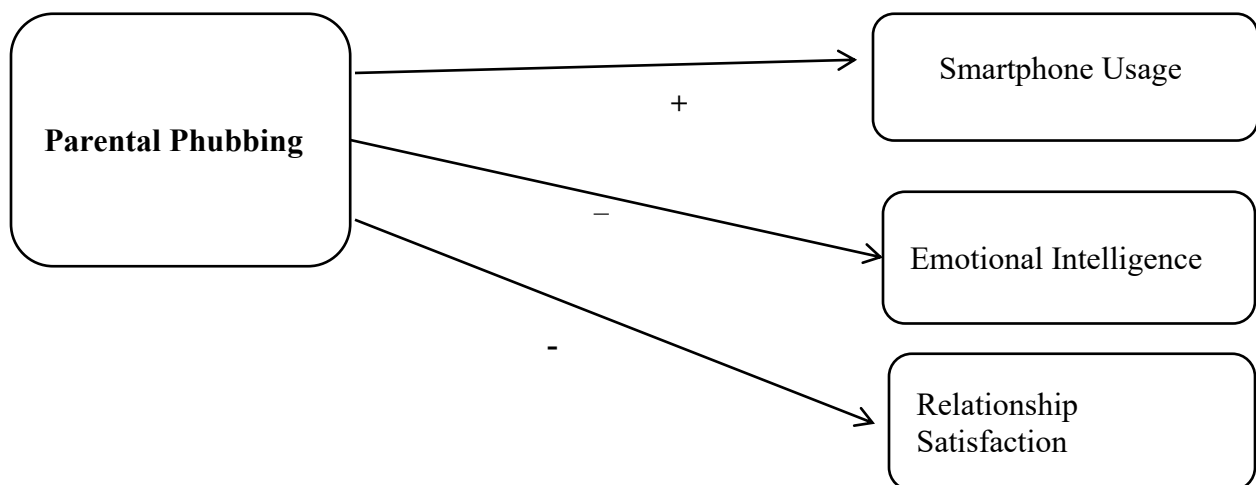
Rationale

The popularization of the use of cellphones during the digital age is making it even more difficult for parents to communicate comfortably with their children, and this has led to the adoption of a practice where parents are phubbing their kids and giving their undivided attention to the phones. This new form of digital distraction is a severe threat to healthy child development and family relations. The fact that phubbing in parents is committed by the said parent and has been found to trigger a series of negative impact on the emotional, social, and cognitive development of the child would make the present study consider it as the independent variable. Noting that only 14 percent of children and adults have daily sources of stress to cope with, as observed by McDaniel and Radesky (2018). The most important developmental and relational outcomes that are potentially affected by parental phubbing can be traced in the dependent variables selected in the case of this research work: smartphone using behavior of parents, emotional intelligence of children, and assessment of relationships. Emotional intelligence is essential to children because it determines their self-control, empathy, and social interaction, and researchers have linked deficiency of emotional development to lack of parental involvement (Xie & Xie, 2020). Similarly, the affective and physical availability of

parents during interactions can affect the way the children would criticize the parent-child bond. What is more, parental use of smartphones is a cause and a contributor to phubbing habits and, besides promoting the latter, it might be consolidated through relational distress and emotion avoidance. This is because it contributes to the extinction of species and survival of the fittest principle, (Abels et al., 2021).

The use of smartphones by many people during the digital era has altered the dynamics of family relationships especially between kids and parents. One of these that are rather minor yet significant is parental phubbing the act of parents being glued to their mobile devices when communicating with their children. This new phenomenon provides a different angle to study failure in the emotional relationships and family communications. Parents phubbing is believed to undermine the parent and child relationship which is central to optimal socioemotional development of children. Attachment theory and family systems theory have shown that the quality of this interaction directly affects the ability of children to learn how to understand and express their feelings, establish trust and develop relationships in the future. Heavy telephone use which interferes with the availability of the parents negates emotional security and may ruin any relationships. The parent-child interaction is expected to affect two major kid outcomes which are emotional intelligence and connection evaluation. Emotional intelligence is the basis of academic success, social participation and the ability to effectively handle emotions. A low parental involvement child might also lack the emotional modeling needed to cope with handling emotions and thus the child might develop low emotional intelligence. Similarly, initial relational experiences influence relationship appraisal i.e. how a child measures trust, support and relationship happiness. A disturbed or cool parent child relationship may lead to negative expectations in peer, romantic or authority relationships later in life. Parental smartphone use is one of such situational factors that determine the likely occurrence and severity of the phubbing behavior. Parental addiction to smartphones and their excessive or excessive use may forecast the increased incidence of phubbing episodes, but not always dangerous to health. By being aware of the levels of smartphone usage researchers may tell the difference between the observer grade cases of distraction which appears on a sporadic basis and the trend of emotional detachment in regards to smartphone dependency. On the whole, these variables compose a well-knit system based on developmental psychology, media psychology and attachment theory. The model aims at examining both immediate effects of the modern methods of parenting on the development of children and the mediating processes through which these consequences are realized. The benefit of both interpersonal (relational) and intrapersonal (emotional intelligence) consequences plays an important part in ensuring a full understanding of the long-term consequences of technology aided approaches towards parenting.

Conceptual framework



Objectives

- To examine the relationship between parental phubbing and emotional intelligence of children.
- To explore the effect of parental phubbing on children's relationship assessment abilities.
- To analyze the influence of parental phubbing on children's smartphone usage.

Hypotheses

1. Parental phubbing significantly negatively predicts emotional intelligence in children.
2. Parental phubbing significantly negatively predicts relationship assessment in children.
3. Parental phubbing significantly positively predicts smartphone usage in children.
4. Students from different socioeconomic classes will differ significantly in their emotional intelligence, with middle-class students scoring higher.
5. Marriage duration of parents will significantly impact emotional intelligence and relationship assessment in children, with children of 12–15 years of parental marriage duration scoring higher.
6. Parents' education level will significantly affect smartphone usage in children, with children of more educated parents showing higher usage.

Methodology

Research design

Method Research Design Utilizing a correlational study approach, the current inquiry was conducted. Investigating how parental phubbing effect smartphone usage, and relationship assessment of students. The sample for the study contained 302 participants. Men and women made up (n=193) and (n=109), respectively, of the participants who provided the data (N=302). Considerations were gender, education, family structure, socioeconomic status, duration of marriage, and place of residence. The participants ranged in age from 10 to 19. The data came from numerous sources in Sargodha. Inclusion Criteria Students of different age range 10-19 were included in current study.

Participants

The sample of the study were the adolescents; their parents and the sampling was specifically in the educational institutes which included the schools, colleges and universities. The field survey was also conducted using resident (urban area / rural area), family system (joint family / nuclear family) and gender (male /female) as criteria of collecting the data. This research was founded on cross sectional survey research design. Sample of students (N= 302) was selected to carry out the study using convenient sampling technique as the method of selection. The students are studying in schools, colleges and universities of the Punjab district, data was measured.

Instruments

In the present study English questionnaire of the following tools were used for data collection from targeted sample.

Demographic form

The demographic form was prepared to ask certain details to the participant like name, age, and education. A participant signed an information consent before the data gathering was done.

Instruments

Perceptual Discrepancies in Parental phubbing (Roberts and David 2016)

Parental Phubbing Scale (PPBS) is a modification of the original Phubbing Scale created by Roberts and David (2016), which is used to measure parental phubbing behaviors. The phubbing between parents and children means that parents neglect their children or do not pay attention to their problems because of the overuse of smartphones. The instrument will involve the completion of the Parental Phubbing Scale, having 9 items (Cronbach number = 0.87), which will be scored on a range of 5 points. The answers were of the type: 1 (strongly disagree); 5 (strongly agree); the higher the scores, the more intensive are the forms of parental phubbing. The questionnaire of the parent was a modification of that of the student where the subject was replaced.

Adolescent Smartphone Dependence (Kwon et al. 2013)

SAS-SV (Smart phone Addiction Scale-Short version) is one of the most popular instruments to assess smart phone addiction created by Kwon, Kim, Cho and Yang (2013). The scale includes 10 items designed as Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree) The scores of each item are included in the total score, and a higher score means a higher level of the smartphone addiction.

Relationship Assessment Scale (Hendrick, 1988)

Susan S. Hendrick has introduced the Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) in 1988 used to assess general satisfaction of relationship. Designed in the early stages to use with couples, it is commonly altered and used in various relationships, especially when investigating emotional connection, satisfaction, and quality of communication within the parent-child relations. The RAS is aimed at serving as a fast and valid indicator of relationship satisfaction on the global scale. It has just 7 items, which makes it short but effective to evaluate the gist of analyzing the relationship satisfaction. Cronbach alpha coefficients which always exceeded 0.75

Emotional Intelligence Scale (Law, Wong, & Song, 2004)

The Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) scoring involves summing the responses to 16 items, each rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree). The WLEIS consist of 16 items. Cronbach's alpha coefficients consistently above 0.80

Procedure

Data gathering started in a number of schools around Sargodha once it had been given the department's approval. The fact that this is an academic study and that the only use of the findings would be for educational reasons is made very apparent to the participants. Participants were given a study information sheet that provided a thorough explanation of the objectives of the study as well as a warning regarding possible discomfort. The difficulty of the survey and the length of time needed to fill out the survey booklet Participants were made aware of the confidentiality policy, the protection of their information, and their right to withdraw at any time during the course of the study. Following brief instructions to complete the scales and complete the demographic sheet, participants who had shown an interest in participating in the study were encouraged to do so. While the participants are filling out the scales, the researcher stays close by and make an effort to respond to any questions or concerns the participants may have as quickly as possible. At the conclusion of the evaluation, I thanked the participants for their willingness to take part in the study without getting any financial remuneration. The researcher views participation in the study as a significant addition to psychological understanding. Statistical Analysis 13IBM-SPSS was used to analyze data using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and regression. Cronbach alpha was obtained as a result of reliability analysis and mediation was also carried out to gauge the variations.

Results

Table 1: Psychometric Properties of Study Variables (N = 302)

Variables	No. Of Items	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range	α
EI	16	77.97	21.35	19-108	.91
PPS	5	19.41	6.67	8-39	.75
RAS	7	26.11	5.34	7-35	.79
SPU	10	36.56	10.48	10-60	.85

Note. PCR=, PP=Parental Phubbing, RAS=relationship assessment scale, SPU= Smartphone Usage

Table 1 shows psychometric properties of study variables. The alpha value for emotional intelligence is highly acceptable that is .91. The alpha value for parental phubbing is high .75. The alpha value for relationship assessment is acceptable .79. The alpha value for smartphone usage is also .85. All scales indicated satisfactory internal consistency

Table 2: Correlation among Study Variables (N = 302)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
EI		1	-.30**	.63**	.07
PP			1	-.28**	.30**
RAS				1	.10
SPU					1

NOTE. EI= Emotional Intelligence, PP=Parental Phubbing, RAS=relationship assessment scale, SPU= Smartphone Usage

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Table 2 shows that. Emotional intelligence is positively correlated with relationship assessment ($r = .63$, $p < .01$) whereas negatively correlated with parental phubbing ($r = -.30$, $p < .01$). Parental phubbing is positively correlated with smartphone usage. ($r = .30$, $p < .01$) and negatively correlated with relationship assessment ($r = -.28$, $p < .01$).

Discussion

The present research aimed to examine the impact of parental phubbing on emotional intelligence, relationship appraisal, and smartphone use of students. The findings provide empirical data to the proposed correlations of these factors. Similar to the findings of earlier studies that parental neglect caused by the excessive use of mobile phones can deteriorate the emotional and relational well-being of the children, the correlation analysis revealed a significant negative relationship between parental phubbing and emotional intelligence ($r = -.30$, $p < .01$), and relationship assessment ($r = -.28$, $p < .01$) (Roberts & David, 2016). Conversely, the use of smartphones by children and parent phubbing were positively correlated ($r = .30$, $p < .01$), which implies the potential modeling effect where children model their Internet behaviors after their parents. There is no evidence to imply that kids are facing a new challenge that they cannot handle on their own. (McDaniel & Radesky, 2018). These correlations were corroborated by regression analysis as well. Parental phubbing was a large predictor of higher smart phone usage ($p < .001$, $B = .30$), lower emotional intelligent ($p < .001$, $B = .09$) and, lower relationship evaluation ($p < .001$, $B = -.30$). All these findings indicate that parental

disengagement caused by overusing the cellphone can directly negatively affect the emotional development and relationship satisfaction of children and promote an ever-greater use of cellphones as well. This goes in line with the social learning theory that maintains that individuals tend to copy what other individuals they come across do. (Bandura, 1977) Also, there was a significant variation of mean variations based on home setting. Children with good home environment reported significantly higher emotional intelligence, satisfaction with relations, and less smartphone used in comparison with children brought up in poor home environment. All these findings show how constructive family backgrounds could enhance beneficial qualities in regards to psychology and at the same time control de-meritonal practices. Bradley, and Corwyn, (2002).

Employment position disparities were also found out. The scores in relationship evaluation and emotional intelligence were more in the people employed implying that due to work requirements and habit people may practice their emotions and advance their talents in dealing with other people. Socioeconomic status also affected emotional intelligence. In comparison with the children born in upper- and lower-class families, children in middle-class families were more emotionally intelligent. This may be a sign of a balanced dosage of social and education stimulation which facilitates growth of emotions. Constant marital duration could also lead to constant parental approaches which are meaningful to children growth as observed in higher levels of emotional intelligence and evaluation of relationships of children whose parents had a marital span of 12 15 years (Conger & Donnellan, 2007). Lastly, parents, educational attainment affected the use of the smartphone. Among the children whose parents were more educated, the usage of smartphones was significantly higher. This could be possibly because of differences in parenting styles in terms of censorship of the screen or exposure to more technology in homes where education levels are higher. The high level of parental phubbing, with its grave consequences to both the outdoor activity and psychological indicators, became evident in general findings of the study. It aims at underlining the importance of maintaining profound parent-child relationships despite electronic distraction increasing. The findings endorse the utilization of digital mindfulness with the help of parents to aid children to develop a superior level of emotional and interpersonal ability

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