



Antecedents and Consequences of Partner Phubbing: Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract: This study aims to examine the antecedents and consequences of partner phubbing based on empirical findings published in the last five years. This study uses a systematic literature review with the SPIDER approach. The review applies inclusion and exclusion criteria. The literature search uses Publish or Perish 8 with Google Scholar and journal databases including PubMed, Sagepub, ResearchGate, Scopus, ScienceDirect, and Elsevier. The review results show that antecedents of partner phubbing are dominated by individual psychological factors. These factors include loneliness, attachment anxiety, low self-esteem, low empathy, fear of missing out, and addiction to gadgets and social media. Relational factors also contribute to partner phubbing behavior. These factors include low intimacy, ineffective communication, increased conflict, and low partner responsiveness. The findings also indicate that partner phubbing has negative consequences for romantic relationships. Short-term effects include sadness, anger, irritation, and feelings of loneliness. Long-term effects include increased jealousy and conflict, reduced commitment, decreased intimacy, weakened trust, lower relationship satisfaction, and reduced individual well-being. These impacts can undermine relationship stability and quality. This review provides a structured overview of recent evidence on partner phubbing and highlights key psychological and relational mechanisms that explain its causes and consequences.

Keywords: Antecedents, Consequences, Partner Phubbing, Systematic Literature Review

Introduction

In this digital era, mobile phones have become an indispensable tool in establishing relationships between individuals to stay connected to bridge the gap between long distances and foster emotional closeness (Maftei & Măirean, 2023). The use of gadgets in this era provides many benefits, not only facilitating access to relationships with your spouse or family, gadgets also make it easier to search and distribute information and of course make it easier to access entertainment and education (Farida et al, 2021). The use of gadgets in the world has experienced a significant surge in recent decades, as reported by Lukács J et al, (2023) shows that the use of gadgets worldwide will reach more than 7.2 billion users by 2025.

Research conducted by Steinebach et al, (2025) It shows that technology-mediated communication, such as texting every day, can increase satisfaction, commitment, and communication in relationships. However, relationship satisfaction is not always maintained in a stable manner, along with the development of the times and the rapid

development of technology, various new challenges arise that can interfere with the quality of the couple's relationship. One of them is behavior *phubbing* or *phone snubbing*, which is a person's tendency to ignore face-to-face interactions with their partner because they focus more on their phones (Sholehah & Pratiwi, 2025). *Phubbing* was initiated on May 12, 2012 in Australia due to the rise of people who focus on their gadgets so that they neglect the people close to them (Capilla et al, 2021). Research conducted by Farkhah et al, (2023) shows the presence of behavioral impacts *phubbing* which are classified into 3 categories including psychological, physical health, and social conditions.

Phenomenon *phubbing* This has become a serious psychological issue in the modern digital age (Ugur & Koc, 2015). In the context of relationships, such behavior is often known as *partner phubbing*. *Partner phubbing* occurs when one partner pays more attention to the phone than emotional involvement with his or her partner who is present nearby. This creates feelings of being ignored, lowers the quality of communication, and has the potential to cause emotional distance in relationships (Ross et al, 2018). Malika & Rinaldi, (2025) do research on *partner phubbing* It was found that there was a significant relationship between *partner phubbing* with relationship satisfaction in married couples, for unmarried couples show insignificant results.

The existence of activities related to social media can also be a contributor to conflict in the relationship of couples, where the results of the research Wahyudi et al, (2022) revealing that men who feel lonely then spending their time with social media can increase relational aggression in their romantic relationships. The above findings certainly indicate a shift in priorities in social interactions, where virtual connections take precedence over physical presence. Phenomenon *phubbing* is a negative impact that develops along with technological advances that are contrary to the norms and ethics of face-to-face communication because it is considered to ignore the interlocutor (Constantin & Setijadi, 2023).

Partner phubbing It has become a widespread problem in modern relationships because it lowers the sense of security and emotional support in young couples that can trigger anxiety (Han et al, 2025). Behavior *Partner phubbing* It acts as a social allergen that can trigger negative reactions in the affected couple, since the presence of a mobile phone in face-to-face interactions can hinder a sense of interpersonal closeness and trust, empathy, and understanding between couples Pollmann et al, (2021). This phenomenon of course has become rampant along with the use of gadgets that are relied on as a tool for work, entertainment, and social networks that will never stop calling the attention of their users, so that recently not only activities outside the home can trigger conflicts in the household, but also activities in the home such as excessive use of gadgets can cause conflicts between couples and lead to divorce (Pratiwi, 2020).

The antecedent of the *phubbing partner* of course does not only come from technology, but can also be from the psychological factors possessed by the individual so that the antecedent of the *phubbing partner* is not static which will continue to change as the individual's life experience increases. The increasing prevalence of *phubbing* shows the need for a deeper understanding of the antecedents and consequences, with this research it is

hoped that it can contribute to the understanding of the antecedents and consequences related to *partner phubbing* based on the latest literacy in the last 5 years.

Methodology

This study has several stages including: the first stage is review planning where the researcher identifies the objectives and prepares the plan, the second stage is a *review* where the researcher searches journals, selects journals, and assesses the required journal criteria, and the third stage reports the research results. In the review planning stage, the researcher makes research questions using the SPIDER (*Sample, Phenomenon of Interest, Design, Evaluation, Research Type*) formula. The research questions in *this review* are, What are the antecedents and consequences of *partner phubbing*?. Furthermore, in the second stage, the researcher determines the keywords and designs the relevant journal search protocol. The keywords used by the author are, "*partner phubbing*" OR "*attachment*" OR "*loneliness*" OR "*media addiction*" OR "*marital satisfaction*" OR "*relational satisfaction*" OR "*romantic relationship quality*". These keywords were used to search for articles using the Publish or Perish 8 application with Google Scholar, and to search for journals sourced from *PubMed*, *Sagepub*, *ResearchGate*, *Scopus*, *Elsevier* and *ScienceDirect* databases. The next stage is to check for duplicate journals using *Rayyan software*. Next, the researcher screened all journals that had passed the duplicate check based on their titles and abstracts. Furthermore, journals that have passed title and abstract screening will be analyzed in *full text*.

In conducting this *systematic literature review*, the author sets inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure that relevant journals can be included in the analysis stage. The inclusion criteria include several things, including: (1) The journal explicitly discusses the antecedents and consequences of *phubbing partners*, (2) the subjects in this *systematic literature review research* are couples, (3) the types of research included include quantitative, qualitative, and *mixed methods (mix method)*, (4) Journals written in English, and (5) journals used must have been published within the last 5 years. On the other hand, the author determines the exclusion criteria to filter journals that are not in accordance with the topic including: (1) journals that do not directly discuss the antecedents and consequences of *phubbing partners*, (2) journals written not in English, (3) non-journal articles such as reports, books, proceedings, and popular articles that do not have clarity in the context of the content.

Result and Discussion

Table 1. List of antecedent findings and consequences of *partner phubbing*

Yes	Author	Subject	The antecedent	Consequences
1.	Beukeboom & Pollmann, (2021)	Subjects in study 1: 507 subjects (minimum length of relationship 4 months) and study 2: 386	The use of 1 gadget together moderates the adverse effects of <i>phubbing</i> .	Couples feel lonely, look less responsive, experience communication disorders, decreased relationship satisfaction, decreased emotional closeness, and decreased intimacy with their partner.

Yes	Author	Subject	The antecedent	Consequences
		subjects (minimum length of relationship length of 3 months).		
2.	David & Roberts, (2021)	Subjects in study 1:97, study 2:120, and study 3:300 (lived in the U.S. and were at least 18 years old).	<i>Attachment anxiety.</i>	Increasing romantic jealousy in couples can later decrease relationship satisfaction, psychological well-being, and increased emotional vulnerability in individuals with <i>attachment anxiety</i> .
3.	Farooqi & Punjab, (2021)	The subjects in this study were 200 married women working in Pakistan.	<i>High self-esteem</i> , job roles, and cultural norms.	It causes feelings of jealousy, decreases <i>relationship closeness</i> , causes communication disorders, conversation quality, and causes potential conflicts in the long term.
4.	Gomes et al, (2021)	The subjects in this study were 384 adult individuals from Portugal.	Gender and sociodemographics (education, economic status, age, and length of relationship).	Lowers intimacy, relationship quality, empathy, and communication with partners.
5.	Khodabakhsh & Ong, (2021)	The subjects in this study were 390 couples married in Kuala Lumpur.	Gender, social media apps, FOMO, low self-control, attachment style, digital multitasking culture, and demographics.	Decreased relationship satisfaction, loss of emotional attention, causing jealousy, and conflict in married couples.
6.	Fingerless, (2021)	The subjects in this study were 756 adult individuals.	There is conflict in the couple's relationship, couples with low self-esteem will be more easily distracted by gadgets and cause <i>phubbing partner behavior</i> , the feeling of loneliness felt by the partner can also cause <i>the partner to phubbing</i> , and gadgets become a medium for emotional escape carried out by the partner.	It decreases relationship satisfaction, increases conflict, increases neglect by partners, and causes feelings of loneliness and emotional isolation in partners.
7.	Aljasir, (2022)	The subjects in this study were 741 from Saudi Arabia who were married and aged 18	Excessive use of gadgets, internet, social media, games, and online messaging applications causes digital addiction in couples.	Relationship satisfaction increases because researchers explain that modern life considers the use of gadgets to be normal, important, and does not threaten relationships.

Yes	Author	Subject	The antecedent	Consequences
		years and above.		
8.	Arshad & Imran, (2022)	The subjects in this study were 300 married individuals from major cities in Pakistan.	Ease of accessing technology continuously.	Increased jealousy, decreased satisfaction, and leads to long-term conflicts that will impact the well-being of the relationship with the partner.
9.	Frackowiak et al, (2022)	The subjects in this study totaled 133 subjects who participated in the 7-day research period.	Excessive use of gadgets.	Couples will feel less cared for, less cared for, and less responded to so that negative moral <i>judgement</i> arises that thinks that the behavior done by the couple is wrong, and decreased relationship satisfaction and feelings of closeness between couples, even though the behavior of the <i>phubbing partner</i> does not directly reduce the quality of the relationship on that very day.
10.	Schokbroek et al, (2022)	The subjects in this study totaled 346.	Unresponsive couples cause other partners to engage in <i>phubbing behavior</i> , <i>phubbing behavior</i> is considered a form of <i>social exclusion</i> when he feels neglected and feelings of insecurity arise, dissatisfaction in the relationship can also cause <i>partner phubbing behavior</i> .	<i>Partner phubbing</i> can increase <i>Electronic Partner Surveillance (EPS)</i> such as checking messages, social media, and other online activities, so that it can cause feelings of undervalue, lack of hearing, and lack of care which will increase anxiety in couples who are phubbed.
11.	Thomas et al, (2022)	The subjects in this study numbered 308 ranging from 18 to 60 years old.	Low levels of empathy and loneliness will make a person less sensitive to direct interaction with their partner, so <i>Phubbing</i> is carried out as one of the avoidance mechanisms.	Decreased relationship satisfaction, decreased emotional closeness, decreased partner life satisfaction, increased loneliness in couples who accept <i>phubbing behavior</i> , and triggering conflicts with partners.
12.	Zhan et al, (2022)	The subjects in this study were 504 adult individuals in China.	Loneliness leads to more <i>phubbing</i> and low romantic relationship satisfaction leads to more <i>phubbing</i> .	Low romantic relationship satisfaction leads to more <i>phubbing</i> and a high level of empathy will make individuals more sensitive to loneliness, but individuals with low empathy tend to view relationships as less important.
13.	Yam, (2023)	There were 308 subjects in this study with an	Addiction to gadgets, social media and the internet, and low <i>self-</i>	Decreased relationship satisfaction, decreased quality of romantic relationships, decreased

Yes	Author	Subject	The antecedent	Consequences
		age range of 18 to 60 years.	<i>regulation</i> make it easy to be distracted.	quality of life due to decreased satisfaction and quality of romantic relationships, and the emergence of feelings of abandonment by couples who engage in <i>phubbing behavior</i> .
14.	Frackowiak et al, (2024)	The subjects in this study showed that there were 133 subjects who lived with their partners.	Low relationship quality makes individuals more susceptible to phubbing behavior, lack of validation and understanding from their partner, because they feel less connected and feel less emotionally secure, the existence of unstable daily emotions so that individuals tend to be more negative, and the presence of gadget distractions.	Increase negative emotional experiences in individuals such as sadness, anger, upset, and loneliness.
15.	Karaman, (2024)	The subjects in this study showed that there were 958 student subjects who were or had been in relationships before.	Phubbing partner <i>behavior</i> can arise when a person experiences stress, frustration, and negative emotions that cause an increase in the use of gadgets, and the habit of digital multitasking where when with a partner they are less emotionally present due to distractions from gadgets.	Increased conflict in relationships, lowering mood and creating negative emotions (feelings of being disturbed, disappointed, and neglected), increasing stress, disrupting self-regulation, lowering overall psychological well-being, lowering the quality of relationships due to unappreciated, unprioritized, and emotionally neglected behavior.
16.	Mahmud et al, (2024)	The subjects in the study were 150 gadget users in Malaysia who were in a relationship.	Basic psychological needs that are not met, addiction to social media and gadgets, and less effective coping behavior.	There is a decrease in relationship satisfaction, causing damage to relationship function, and reducing psychological well-being due to basic needs that are not met.
17.	Peleg, (2024)	The subjects in this study were 431 young adults.	<i>Fear of Missing Out</i> (FoMO) causes individuals with high anxiety to be afraid of feeling left behind in information and are more likely to check their phones consistently causing <i>phubbing behavior</i> , a <i>weak differentiation of self</i> (DoS)	Decreased relationship quality, increased conflict with the partner, gave rise to feelings of being ignored, unappreciated, and less important, reduced the quality of communication, decreased intimacy with the partner, and caused feelings of loneliness.

Yes	Author	Subject	The antecedent	Consequences
			can also trigger <i>phubbing</i> behavior, and demographic factors such as younger women are more prone to fomo.	
18.	Carnelley et al, (2025)	The subjects in this study were 196 subjects.	Individuals with attachment anxiety will use <i>phubbing</i> as a coping mechanism and attachment avoidance as a mechanism to regulate distance from their partner.	Couples with high attachment anxiety can cause sadness, pressure, and stress because they feel neglected, trigger low self-esteem in their partner due to feelings of disrespect, increase the partner's negative emotions, so that feelings of revenge arise, and <i>partner phubbing</i> does not affect relationship satisfaction in the short term, so the behavior of the <i>partner phubbing</i> On the day of the incident only interferes with the emotional well-being of the couple rather than damaging the relationship.

Discussion

Phubbing It is one of the social phenomena that occurs in the modern era today which has penetrated into the realm of romantic relationships better known as *partner phubbing*, *partner phubbing* is a form of digital neglect committed by couples that interferes with the quality of the relationship and the emotional well-being of individuals. Some studies reveal that the main causes of behavior *partner phubbing* It is from individual factors such as loneliness, attachment anxiety, low self-esteem, to negative coping tendencies due to negative emotions felt. Research conducted by Thomas et al, (2022) suggests that individuals with low empathy and loneliness will be more likely to commit *partner phubbing* Because they consider gadgets as a means of negative emotional escape. Other findings made by Peleg, (2024) suggests that FoMO may act as a catalyst, encouraging individuals to experience anxiety, which in turn encourages them to commit suicide. *phubbing* as a coping mechanism. In addition, addiction to gadgets and social media is also the main cause of a person's *partner phubbing* which is corroborated by research conducted by Mahmud et al, (2024) dan Yam, (2023) which highlights that the intensity of gadget and social media use can affect the quality of attention given to couples leading to a decrease in the level of relationship quality and partner satisfaction.

Relational roles also contribute to the occurrence of behavior *partner phubbing* that occurs, such as research conducted by Beukeboom & Pollmann, (2021) which revealed that low emotional intimacy and responsiveness from couples can increase couples' tendency to commit acts of aggression *partner phubbing*, because unsatisfactory relationships, weak communication, and increased conflicts often make couples focus on their gadgets as a form

of avoidance. This is in line with the research conducted Fingerless, (2021) shows that conflict in romantic relationships can support individuals to do *partner phubbing* as a form of coping mechanism to avoid conflicts that occur. Research conducted by Schokbroek et al, (2022) shows that *partner phubbing* can give rise to negative behavior in the partner such as the appearance of a tendency *Electronic Partner Surveillance* (EPS) or monitoring the couple's digital activity due to a decrease in feelings of trust in the relationship between the two.

Consequences caused by *partner phubbing* Almost all studies show a negative impact on romantic relationships, which is explained in the study Frackowiak et al, (2022) Behavior *partner phubbing* It can trigger negative feelings such as sadness, irritability, anger, and loneliness which can lead to a decrease in the quality of daily interactions with your partner. While in the research David & Roberts, (2021) show *partner phubbing* Causes jealousy and the perception that couples no longer value each other's emotional presence, which will lead to gradual relationship conflicts and can worsen the relationship in the long run. (Karaman, 2024). With many conflicts that arise, couples who accept behavior *partner phubbing* tend to want to reciprocate doing the same thing so that it will trigger a negative circle in the romantic interaction that is undertaken. (Carnelley, 2025). The above research shows that the impact of *partner phubbing* occurs in a short period of time in the form of negative emotions on the same day as research conducted by Carnelley, (2025), Frackowiak et al, (2024), dan Thomas, Carnelley, & Hart, (2022), as well as long-term consequences such as decreased commitment, closeness and relationship satisfaction as described in a study conducted by Arshad & Imran, (2022), Beukeboom & Pollmann, (2021), David & Roberts, (2021), Gomes et al, (2021), Karaman, (2024), Mahmud et al, (2024), Parmaksız, (2021), Yam, (2023), dan Zhan et al, (2022).

However, there is certainly another surprising point of view where Aljasir, (2022) in his research shows that *partner phubbing* What happens does not reduce relationship satisfaction for both the perpetrator and his partner because modern life considers the use of gadgets to be normal, important, and does not threaten the relationship. Overall, the research is indeed behavioral *partner phubbing* shows cultural interference in acceptance and how to behave *partner phubbing* This is perceived. It can be concluded that this study shows *partner phubbing* It is a modern phenomenon that has a significant impact on the decline of romantic relationships with partners, emotional well-being, and the quality of life of individuals, so it is important to implement interventions that focus on managing the use of gadgets, improving communication with partners, and strengthening emotional relationships in relationships (Frackowiak et al, 2024).

Conclusion

The results of this *systematic literature review* show that there is a correlation between *phubbing partner behavior* and decreased relationship satisfaction, emotional well-being, and interaction dynamics with partners. The factors that cause *partner phubbing* are dominated by individual psychological aspects such as loneliness, attachment anxiety, low self-esteem, low empathy, FoMo, and addiction to gadgets and social media. The relational factors that can cause *phubbing partner behavior* such as low intimacy, weak communication, increased conflict, and lack of partner responsiveness can make couples engage in *partner phubbing* as

a form of negative coping. The impact of *phubbing partner's* behavior in a short period of time can trigger negative emotions such as sadness, anger, upset, and loneliness which can worsen the quality of daily interactions with the partner. The impact of *partner phubbing* behavior in the long term can increase jealousy, conflict, decreased commitment, reduced intimacy, weaken trust, decreased satisfaction in relationships, and well-being which can trigger retaliatory behavior in the form of retaliatory *phubbing* which creates interaction behavior patterns that can further damage the couple's romantic relationship.

Although most studies show a correlation between behaviors *partner phubbing* with decreased relationship satisfaction, but in research Aljasir, (2022) shows that cultural contexts can perceive behavior *partner phubbing* It is a common behavior in the modern era so that it is not felt to be a threat in the romantic relationship that is lived. So it can be concluded that *partner phubbing* is a digital neglect that cannot be ignored in modern relations, so that some counseling and intervention activities can be carried out as preventive and curative efforts in accompanying technological advances in this digital era with various issues that also accompany. Based on the results of this study, it is suggested that couples build awareness of gadget use, improve face-to-face communication, strengthen empathy, and utilize these findings as a means of creating educational programs related to factors and impacts *partner phubbing* So that they are able to build and maintain a good quality of romantic relationships in this increasingly complex digital era.

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