

# Investigating the Relationship between Phubbing, being Phubbed, and Peer Pressure among Adolescents

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**Abstract:** **Background:** Among various technological advancements, mobile phones have been very fascinating for adolescents, the use of which has a remarkable impact on their social behavior. Due to peer pressure in this stage, phubbing and being phubbed is observed as a common phenomenon that can have negative consequences on relationships and mental health. Peer pressure refers to the influence that peers can have on each other to do things that they may be resistant to, or might not otherwise choose to do. Phubbing is the act of snubbing someone who is talking in person in favor of a phone and the experience of being phubbed can affect one's relationships and mental health. **Objective:** This study is aimed at exploring the relationship between phubbing, being phubbed, and peer pressure among adolescents. **Research Method:** In this non-experimental research design, a simple random sampling technique is used to collect data from 35 adolescents between 17 and 20 years of age studying in private colleges in Chennai. The 15-item Generic Scale of Phubbing, the 22-item Generic Scale of Being Phubbed, and the 25-item Peer Pressure Scale were the tools used to explore if there exists a relationship between phubbing, being phubbed, and peer pressure. **Results:** Pearson's correlation analysis revealed that there exists a statistically significant relationship between the variables phubbing and peer pressure, phubbing and being phubbed, whereas there was no significant relationship between being phubbed and peer pressure.

**Keywords:** peer pressure, phubbing, being phubbed, adolescent, smartphone interruptions

## 1. Introduction

In an age dominated by technological advancements and ubiquitous smartphone usage, the phenomenon of phubbing—snubbing someone in favor of a mobile device—has become increasingly prevalent, significantly impacting interpersonal interactions. Particularly, among adolescents, whose social dynamics and psychological development are profoundly influenced by peer relationships, the prevalence of phubbing behavior and its consequences have raised intriguing questions about its association with peer pressure and the reciprocal experience of being phubbed. The rationale for investigating the relationship between phubbing, being phubbed, and peer pressure among adolescents stems from the pressing need to comprehend the intricate dynamics of modern interpersonal relationships within this demographic in the digital age. Adolescence marks a critical period characterized by heightened susceptibility to social influences, making it a pertinent stage for examining the dynamics of interpersonal behaviors such as phubbing and their effects on peer relationships. The term 'phubbing' represents a modern social phenomenon wherein individuals engage with their smartphones or other digital devices while in the presence of others, leading to feelings of neglect, exclusion, and diminished social interaction among those being ignored. Notably, the repercussions of phubbing extend beyond mere social discomfort, potentially affecting adolescents' self-esteem, emotional well-being, and perceptions of social acceptance. Through comprehensive analysis, this study aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge concerning the intricate nexus between phubbing, being phubbed, and peer pressure among adolescents. The findings can inform strategies to promote healthier communication patterns and positively impact

adolescents' social and emotional well-being in the digital era.

## 2. Literature Survey

The study by Roberts, J. A., & David, M. E. (2016) delves into the impact of phubbing on romantic relationships, highlighting its detrimental effects on relationship satisfaction. Understanding the consequences of phubbing within intimate relationships provides insights into its potential implications on broader social interactions among adolescents.

Exploring the concept of mobile phone dependency among adolescents, the research by Wang, P. et.al. (2017) sheds light on how excessive phone use might affect social behaviors and academic performance. It offers perspectives on the prevalence of phubbing and its potential consequences in adolescent peer interactions.

The study by Chotpitayasunondh, V., & Douglas, K. M. (2018) investigates the effects of phubbing on face-to-face social interactions, highlighting the feelings of exclusion and diminished social interaction experienced by individuals subjected to phubbing. Understanding these effects is crucial in comprehending the dynamics of peer relationships among adolescents.

Addressing the potential impact of digital screen use on adolescents' mental well-being, the study done by Przybylski, A. K., & Weinstein, N. (2017) provides insights into the broader implications of excessive screen time on psychological health. It can offer perspectives on the potential links between phubbing experiences and mental well-being among adolescents.

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Investigating factors associated with problematic smartphone use, the research done by Elhai, J. et al (2016) explores how feelings of anxiety, depression, and the fear of missing out might contribute to increased reliance on smartphones. Understanding these psychological aspects can provide context for the prevalence of phubbing behaviors among adolescents.

Based on the literature reviewed we arrive at the research question "What are the perceptions of peer pressure among adolescents, and how do they relate to phubbing behaviors and experiences of being phubbed?". This study delves into understanding adolescents' perceptions of peer pressure within the context of phubbing behaviors and experiences of being phubbed. It seeks to explore how adolescents perceive peer pressure about their engagement in phubbing behaviors and their experiences of being ignored or excluded by others who are phubbing. By investigating these relationships, the study aims to shed light on the complex dynamics of adolescent peer interactions in the digital age and their potential implications for social well-being.

### Research Method

In this non-experimental research design, a simple random sampling technique is used to collect data from 35 adolescents between 17 and 20 years of age studying in private colleges in Chennai. The 25-item Peer Pressure Scale authored by Singh and Saini (2010), the 15-item Generic Scale of Phubbing, and the 22-item Generic Scale of Being Phubbed both authored by Chopitayasunondh, V., & Douglas, K. M. (2018) were used to collect data.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### Descriptive Statistics

A frequency table was generated to describe the distribution of gender in the sample. As shown in Table 1, the majority of the participants were female (n=29, 82.9%), while 6 participants were male (n=6, 17.1%). The results for the gender-wise distribution of the respondents are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Frequency table of gender distribution in the sample

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Female	29	82.9
Male	6	17.1

Descriptive statistics were calculated to summarize the distribution of age groups in the sample. As shown in Table 2, the largest age group was 17-18 years (n=21, 60%) and the smallest was 19-20 years (n=14, 40%). The results for the age-wise distribution of the respondents are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Descriptive statistics for the age group in the sample

Age Group	Frequency	Percent
Age 19- 20 years	14	40
Age 17-18 years	21	60
Total	35	100

Note. The age variable is recoded into two categories to create the age group variable

Descriptive statistics were calculated to summarize the distribution of variables peer pressure, phubbing, and being phubbed in the sample. As shown in Table 3, the mean score for peer pressure was 68.3 (SD=10.33, range=48-88), the mean score for phubbing was 37.6 (SD=12.20, range=15-62) and the mean score for being phubbed was 74.3 (SD=22.05, range=24-111). Descriptive statistics for the variables peer pressure, phubbing, and being phubbed are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3:** Descriptive statistics for the variables under study for the sample

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Peer Pressure	35	68.37	10.33	48	88
Phubbing	35	37.66	12.204	15	62
Being Phubbed	35	74.43	22.047	24	111

### Testing the Normality of Distribution:

The Shapiro Wilk test results given by  $W(35)=0.976$ ,  $p=0.618$  for peer pressure,  $W(35)=0.977$ ,  $p=0.657$  for phubbing and  $W(35)=0.959$ ,  $p=0.219$  for being phubbed confirm that the three variables are normally distributed. Hence parametric analysis was done to find if there exists a statistically significant relationship between the variables peer pressure, phubbing behaviour, and the experience of being phubbed among late adolescents. Tests of Normality for the variables under study are given in Table 4.

**Table 4:** Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Peer Pressure	0.115	35	.200*	0.976	35	0.618
Phubbing	0.085	35	.200*	0.977	35	0.657
Being Phubbed	0.102	35	.200*	0.959	35	0.219

\*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

### Correlation Analysis

The relationship between the variables peer pressure, phubbing, and being phubbed was investigated using Pearson's correlation analysis.

It was hypothesized that a significant relationship exists between peer pressure and phubbing. Pearson product-moment correlation was found to be moderately positive and statistically significant ( $r=0.39$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), which supported the hypothesis. This shows that an increase in peer pressure would lead to increased phubbing behavior among adolescents.

It was hypothesized that a significant relationship exists between peer pressure and being phubbed. Pearson product-moment correlation was found to be markedly negligible positive and statistically insignificant ( $r=0.253$ ,  $p>0.05$ ), which did not support the hypothesis. This shows that peer pressure and the experience of being phubbed among adolescents are not related.

It was hypothesized that a significant relationship exists between phubbing and being phubbed. Pearson product-moment correlation was found to be moderately positive and statistically significant ( $r=0.516$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), which supported the hypothesis. This shows that an increase in phubbing behavior among adolescents increased the experience of being phubbed. Pearson's Correlation Analysis for the variables under study is given in Table 5.

**Table 5:** Correlation Analysis for the variables Peer Pressure, Phubbing, and Being Phubbed

	Peer Pressure	Phubbing	Being Phubbed
Peer Pressure	1		
Phubbing	.390*	1	
Being Phubbed	0.253	.516**	1

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Comparison of Means of Peer Pressure, Phubbing, and Being Phubbed**

The results of the independent sample t-test conducted to find the difference in phubbing behavior between female and male groups revealed that there were no significant differences ( $t(33)=0.847$ ,  $p=0.414$ ) between female

( $m=68.86$ ,  $SD=10.97$ ) and male ( $m=66$ ,  $SD=6.603$ ) respondents. The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference= $2.862$ , 95% CI:  $-4.523$  to  $10.428$ ) was insignificant.

The results of the independent sample t-test conducted to find the difference in phubbing behavior between female and male groups revealed that there were no significant differences ( $t(33)=0.034$ ,  $p=0.973$ ) between female ( $m=37.69$ ,  $SD=12.728$ ) and male ( $m=37.50$ ,  $SD=10.271$ ) respondents. The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference= $0.190$ , 95% CI:  $-11.113$  to  $11.493$ ) was insignificant.

The results of the independent sample t-test conducted to find the difference in phubbing behavior between female and male groups revealed that there were no significant differences ( $t(33)=0.272$ ,  $p=0.787$ ) between female ( $m=74.90$ ,  $SD=23.544$ ) and male ( $m=72.17$ ,  $SD=13.920$ ) respondents. The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference= $2.730$ , 95% CI:  $-17.667$  to  $23.127$ ) was insignificant. Results of the Independent Sample t-test for the variables under study are given in Table 6.

**Table 6:** Independent Sample t-test for the variables peer pressure, phubbing, and being phubbed

		Mean	SD	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances			t-test for Equality of Means						
				Assumption	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
												Lower	Upper
Peer Pressure	F	68.86	10.970	Equal variances not assumed	5.28	0.03	0.847	11.662	0.414	2.862	3.379	-4.523	10.248
	M	66.00	6.603										
Phubbing	F	37.69	12.728	Equal variances assumed	0.563	0.458	0.034	33	0.973	0.190	5.556	-11.113	11.493
	M	37.50	10.271										
Being Phubbed	F	74.90	23.544	Equal variances assumed	2.538	0.121	0.272	33	0.787	2.730	10.026	-17.667	23.127
	M	72.17	13.920										

Note. Group F is Female and M is Male

**Comparison of Peer Pressure between the low, medium, and high levels of SES**

ANOVA was conducted to find if there exists a significant difference in peer pressure across three levels low, medium, and high socioeconomic status. The ANOVA results suggest that there is no significant difference in peer pressure ( $F_{2,32}=0.025$ ,  $p=0.975$ ) across the three levels of SES.

Since Levene's statistic is insignificant, equal variance is assumed. To check for individual differences between groups post-hoc comparisons were assessed using Tukey. The test indicated that the mean scores for low SES ( $m = 68.52$ ,  $SD = 10.671$ ), middle SES ( $m = 67.25$ ,  $SD = 10.340$ ), and high SES ( $m = 68.5$ ,  $SD = 10.661$ ) did not differ significantly from each other. The mean differences of SES in peer pressure were not significant at the 0.05 level. ANOVA results for the variables under study are given in Table 7.

**Table 7:** ANOVA for Peer Pressure differences between the low, medium, and high levels of SES

SES	N	Mean	SD	Levene's Test for Homogeneity of Variances			df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
				Levene Statistic	Sig.						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Low SES	27	68.52	10.671	0.005	0.995	2	2.840	0.025	0.975	64.30	72.74	
Middle SES	4	67.25	10.340							50.80	83.70	
High SES	4	68.50	10.661							51.54	85.46	
Total	35	68.37	10.33							64.82	71.92	

## 4. Conclusion

The study revealed that there exists a statistically significant relationship between the variables phubbing and peer pressure, phubbing and being phubbed, whereas there was no significant relationship between being phubbed and peer pressure. Understanding the associations between phubbing, being phubbed, and peer pressure helps devise strategies and interventions aimed at fostering healthier peer relationships. Unraveling these connections can provide valuable insights into the broader societal implications of excessive digital device use on interpersonal communication and social dynamics. The limitations are that the findings might not be universally applicable across diverse adolescent populations, considering variations in cultural backgrounds, geographical locations, and technological access. Variables not accounted for in the study like individual differences in personality traits, family dynamics, or mental health issues, could influence the relationships.

## 5. Future Scope

The future of the study lies in addressing its limitations and expanding its scope through cross-cultural, longitudinal, and qualitative research. Intervention studies can test strategies to mitigate negative effects, while exploring mediating factors like self-esteem and parental influence. As technology evolves, investigating its impact on phubbing behaviors and peer dynamics is crucial. Through these avenues, the study can inform interventions and policies to foster healthier peer relationships and digital communication practices among adolescents.

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