PHUBBING: A PHENOMENON
THAT IS MENDING SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

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A competitive evolution began in human communication during the last few decades and it revolutionized the way humans use to communicate, with the advancement of mobile phone, technology and addition of the internet to this device transforming it into a smartphone, which the creator of this device had never imagined. The fast pace of life and the spread of internet bought many features together and the smartphone was no more only a device for long distance verbal communications but its usage and dependency also increased from such features as social networking, online shopping, internet surfing, etc. These features, on one hand, made life easy but on another hand, it bought many psychological issues to their verge. Especially the way humans used to communicate face-to-face was not only facing challenges but also it started affecting us socially. A common behavior nowadays, we all almost encounter during social conversations is multitasking i.e. using our smartphones and simultaneously having face-to-face conversation which psychologist named Phubbing. This behavior is affecting all of us in different social settings and is having a profound effect on our relationships. This paper tries to analyze early research work on Phubbing and tries to understand its impact on our different social relationships with time and space and tries to bring into light its severity and impact.

Keywords: Phubbing; Smartphones; Relationship; and Communication.

Introduction

Smartphones overtook computer and laptops as it was loaded with features, which these different devices used to have separately. The fast connecting internet on smartphones made everyday life easy and accessible. It revolutionized every aspect of human life from communication, online shopping, banking to even the socialization process. The device shortens the virtual distance among people but despite their obvious advantages smartphones may sometimes create gaps between people and pull them apart (Turkle, 2012). This gadget is becoming so important in an individual's life that people end up ignoring others with whom they are sharing physical space or having a face-to-face conversation. This Phenomenon, Phubbing is becoming an acceptable norm in everyday communication (Chotpitayasunondh, 2016). Despite such an apparent spread of this phenomenon, the research in this field is still in its infancy stage. The current research aims to understand its impact on different human relationships in various contexts of different social settings.

The term Phubbing is almost a decade old, which came into existence with the invention of smartphone technology. The word Phubbing actually is like

a synonym to ignoring or neglecting someone. This newly coined term, emerged from the merging of two words Phone and Snubbing, which refers to "snubbing someone in a social setting by looking at your phone instead of paying attention" (Abeele et al., 2016, p. 562). The quality of interaction goes low as people are engaged in multiple conversations i.e. one on a smartphone and another one face-to-face. (Abeele et al., 2016), and leads to weaker relationships (Nazir & Pişkin, 2016). Around the world, the drive against Phubbing had taken a huge force and many researchers have tried to define a term which fits such behavior for example in one definition it was defined as the act of snubbing someone by looking at his phone instead of paying attention in social settings.

It is clear from the above definition that there are some components involved in this entire phenomenon. The first component is Phubber, which can be, defined as the person who is using the smartphone while in a social setting. The second component is Phubbee, the person affected by phubber and the third important component, is the Social setting itself, which means it involves two or more persons in a social context. Because, if a phubber is using a smartphone without the presence of any other person, then it cannot be considered as Phubbing. Therefore, Phubbing needs to be in a social setting where at least two or more persons must be involved. Also, it is important to keep in consideration that a phubber can be addicted to either a smartphone, social media or even the phubber can be an introvert as researchers are intensively working on to find the determinants of Phubbing behavior. There are a number of studies, which have serious claims regarding Phubbing phenomenon and its determinants. A study conducted in order to find the determinants of Phubbing found various possible determinants such as smartphone addiction, Social Media addiction, Online Gaming addiction which can significantly predict Phubbing (Karadag, 2015). Another study found that Phubbing does not appear to be exclusively related to addiction behaviors and nevertheless results highlighted a strong connection of Phubbing with online addiction behaviors such as social media addiction, internet addiction as well as with psychological and psychosocial determinants of online compulsive behaviors (Guazzin, 2019). In another research paper Phubbing and what could be its determinants, a dugout of Literature tried to understand the phenomenon and concluded that Smartphone addiction or Internet Addiction, Social Media addiction, Gaming addiction and Personal and Situational factors as important determinants of Phubbing behavior (Nazir, 2019).

Impact of Phubbing in different social relations

Different components of Phubbing such as Phubbing behavior, Phubber and Phubbee are common to observe everywhere in today's technologically advanced society (Haigh, 2015). The biggest question, therefore, is Phubbing behavior an acceptable or a problematic issue and how it can have a profound effect on humans. During the evolution in societies, there is always dramatic shifts in social norms and new norms evolve and adopted rapidly (Sunstein, 1996). New norms also evolve from either personal or observable behaviors (Miller, 1996). It is in

this manner conceivable to measure the degree to which observable behavior and personal behavior can anticipate the degree to which individuals see Phubbing as normative. On the other hand, how, it affects people in day-to-day lives while facing Phubbing also can explain how it can be an acceptable norm or not. Therefore, there are different researches that cover different social interactions in different contexts in different kind of social relationships, which will give understanding of Phubbing whether as an acceptable or unacceptable norm. It can be predicted to what extent people can be Phubbed by Phubbing behavior itself and Phubbing can result in a vicious, self-reinforcing cycle that makes the behavior, become regularizing (Chotpitayasunondh, 2016).

Phubbing behavior affects almost every one of us as we have our family dinner or sitting with a partner in a restaurant or walking or waiting for a bus with a friend or even in official meetings or during course lectures. The intrusion of smartphone devices happens in every setting of life as it is used as an accessory but not as the priority. It is affecting our day-to-day relations and face-to-face communication. It has changed the way we used to have face-to-face conversations and it has completely influenced our social interaction structure. In a recent study conducted in Ankara, Turkey around 86.2% of students thought that the person they are talking to doesn't listen to them because of Phubbing and 83.3% of people are annoyed (Nazir, 2017).

Effects of Phubbing among Romantic Partners

The effects of Phubbing are visible, its impacts are too deep, and its constant exposure is affecting all of us in everyday life. Researchers study this phenomenon extensively among romantic partners and reported profound effects on relationships. For example, Partner Phubbing i.e. encountering Phubbing phenomenon when in the company of spouse or partner. The pervasive nature of smartphones makes Partner Phubbing a near inescapable occurrence. In fact, a study conducted among romantic relationships which involved 143 females and reported that smartphones interfered in their interactions with their partners sometimes, often, very often or all the times (McDaniel, 2014). Another study similar to this found lower levels of satisfaction with one's romantic partner due to distractions caused by smartphone. It was found that perceived closeness, connection, and conversation quality and can interfere with human relationships just by the mere presence of a smartphone (Przybylski, 2012).

In every relationship, paying attention to the partner is important and the constant distractions can bitter the strength of relationships. During the time spent together by partners if one partner is Phubbing this sends a subliminal message of that partner's priorities (McDaniel, 2014). During a conversation with a romantic partner, checking or responding to an instant message or checking notifications instead of interacting with them makes the partner, feel that interaction with them is less important than a smartphone. Humans have limited attention resources and many partners try to handle smartphones as a way of multitasking while with a partner which directly interfere with one's attention and taking it

away from his or her romantic partner (Weinstein, 2012). Among highly anxiously attached individuals Partner Phubbing intensify interpersonal insecurity and cause conflicts which effect's relationship satisfaction negatively (Collins, 2000). Researchers found negative and profound impacts of Phubbing on relationships and affect the relationship satisfaction between the partners.

Phubbing is having a profound impact on social interactions in different settings. A study conducted on the effect on individuals of being phubbed in a one-to-one social situation at the University of Kent found that Phubbing effects negatively and significantly, the way a person feels about interaction with the other person. Concentrating on a smartphone instead of on a romantic partner and ignoring the relationship has a negative effect on relationships by hurting the basic need of belongingness. In addition, the person may feel high threats to his or her fundamental needs as the level of Phubbing increases and the quality of communication, as poorer and less satisfaction in a relationship. The research also found that the need for belonging is getting affected by Phubbing, which explains the negative effects on social interaction (Chotpitayasunondh, 2016).

In another interesting study, the researcher investigated the social consequences of Phubbing experimentally. The participants imagined themselves as part of a dyadic conversation while viewing a three-minute animation. During the video, they were extensively, partially or not at all phubbed by their communication Partner and the findings revealed that such Phubbing phenomenon affected perceived communication and relationship satisfaction negatively. (Yeslam, 2019). Yet in another research, the results showed that a person gets less involved in a conversation while smartphones were used during face-to-face interactions and the quality of conversation decreases and the smartphone users were perceived as less polite and inattentive (Mariek, 2016).

All the researches regarding partner Phubbing, in nutshell, shows a negative effect on relationships and in conclusion, from such studies we can say that such a phenomenon not only threatens the feeling of belongingness but also sends subliminal messages regarding the priorities of the partner.

Effects of Phubbing in Formal Settings

Smartphones are supposed to bridge the gap in communication and no doubt they are very successful in doing that but despite their ability to connect us to others across the globe, smartphones, on one hand, make people ignore people who are interacting with those across the table (Dwyer, 2017). This trend is not only viral in such kind of social settings but we also encounter such situations in our formal social lives. Nowadays it is a common behavior seen in official meetings, during universities lectures, even a doctor while attending a patient on one side and using mobile on the other side. Such trends are very common in our day-to-day lives now and it is not only affecting social relationships but also the purpose of such interactions. Advancement in technology and its use in classrooms during lectures is highly appreciated but such trends are effecting the learning processes also.

The issue of Phubbing becomes difficult and complicated when it comes to the field of education. Traditionally assumed, classrooms should be quiet but now the portable electronic gadgets especially the smartphone, became the source of continuous distraction in the classrooms. A study found that the use of smartphones has increased dramatically in the classroom and it has been found that smartphones are owned by 98% of college students (Diamanduros, 2007). During class lectures, 62% of students reported the use of electronic media for non-academic purposes, studying, or doing homework (Jacobsen & Forste, 2011). Extensive conversational exchanges by texting in a silent mode during classes may not be disruptive (Young, 2006). However, this kind of behavior, which is happening during a lecture, is a Phubbing phenomenon. It is one of the toughest tasks for teachers and they struggle with the use of smartphones by students in the classrooms during a lecture while keeping them focused on learning. In another study, 269 university students were surveyed and accepted that the use of smartphones is a distraction and by texting, during the class, they are not paying attention during lectures (Tindell, 2012). This study put a light on the Phubbing phenomenon, which is happening in lectures. No doubt, it may not distract other students but the phenomenon is a true example of Phubbing. In one other survey research which involved faculty members as well as students in order to determine the perception of smartphone use during lectures found that 40% of the students used their smartphones during class and it became the cause of distraction for 85% of students (Burns, 2010). Such personal behaviors often annoy professors in the context of teaching and the learning process (Jenkins, 2011). In a similar study, 95% of students admitted that they used smartphones in class once or twice and about one third reported daily Phubbing (Ugur, 2015).

The major source of distraction in everyday life is multi-tasking by using smartphones and people are unable to concentrate on their primary activity fully. For example, while driving using a smartphone is almost equitant to driving drunk (Strayer, 2006), using smartphones in the classroom has been shown to hinder learning (Wood et al., 2012), and frequent notifications via smartphones can increase symptoms of inattention associated with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (Kushlev, 2016). Research on the cognitive effects of distraction has led many teachers and administrators to implement strict policies in their classrooms regarding use of smartphones (Hammer et al., 2010).

Phubbing behavior is common in every aspect of modern life so the boundaries and norms between work life and private lives have become blurred (Hertlein, 2012). Boss Phubbing (BPhubbing), which can be defined as an employee's perception that his or her supervisor is distracted by his or her smartphone when they are in conversation or in close proximity to others. Such kind of phenomenon compromises the trust of an employ toward the boss and it negatively affects the meaningfulness, availability, and safety, which is important for the engagement of the employee to the work (Li, 2013). The employee's emotional response

towards a boss is effected to the extent to which the boss indicates that you are a valued and skilled employee through his or her words or actions (Scholl, 2003). For a relationship, which can be either work or personal, it must be mutually satisfying and each member of the relationship must be present for the other (Siegel, 2010). During the conversation the constant distraction by supervisors smartphone can make an employee feel less important to their supervisor and that he or she does not have their best interests in mind (Abeele, 2016). A person must be free of both internal and external distractions to be perceived as there for another (Leggett & Rossouw, 2014). During the meetings with employees, those supervisors who cannot separate themselves from their smartphones have a higher risk of losing their employees' trust and, ultimately, their engagement, according to new research from Baylor University's Hankamer School of Business.

Discussion and Conclusion

This paper tries to reveal how smartphones distract and invade our lives and how we ignore other people in our immediate environment. Despite having, the ability to connect us to others across the globe but it makes us ignore people who are very close to us in space and time. Smartphones are invading our social relations and are affecting them profoundly. Whether it is a formal or informal conversation, the smartphone has become part of our lives which we consciously or unconsciously use while in social settings. This decade-old phenomenon is actually changing our social norms and is affecting our social communication. The studies in this area are still in their infancy and yet there is a need to do more researches in order to understand the Phubbing phenomenon. The above literature tries to understand the intrusion of the Phubbing phenomenon in various social settings and tries to understand its impact, how it is slowly changing social norms. This paper also tried to put a light on smartphones impact on our formal relations especially in work life as well as in the field of education. It is necessary to bring technology into classrooms but on the other hand, it is a challenging task for researchers to find the solutions from the hindrances and distractions bought by such technology, which affects the learning processes. Instructors adopt strong policies to check such distractions and stop Phubbing phenomenon but it dissolves the modern concept of freedom in the educational system. It affects the instructor and may affect the learning environment.

Our working relationships is a very different scenario in that it is a hierarchy. The rules come from up to down and Boss Phubbing cannot be ignored by employees nor is it in their control but it affects them and the aim of the work environment. So whether it is a romantic partners, students, or a working relationship the intrusion and its consequences are so much impermissible that Phubbing and its impacts cannot be ignored. There is much more research needed to be done in order to understand this phenomenon in depth and especially there is a strong need to understand its determinants.

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Фаббинг: феномен, изменяющий образ взаимоотношений

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Резюме

В последние несколько десятилетий отмечается тенденция к изменению структуры коммуникации между людьми. Сетевые технологии превратили обычный телефон в смартфон, объединивший множество функций, что сделало его не только устройством связи. Масштаб использования смартфона и зависимость от него увеличились ввиду роста вовлеченности человека в социальные сети, интернет-серфинг, торговлю через Интернет и т.д. Данные явления, с одной стороны, облегчили жизнь человеку, а с другой стороны, привели ко многим психологическим проблемам. Традиционное общение лицом к лицу обладало различными смыслами и глубоко влияло на нас в личном и социальном плане. В современном мире многозадачность считается нормальным поведением, вполне уместно постоянно отвлекаться на свой смартфон во время разговора с собеседником. Психологи называют такое поведение «фаббинг» – (phubbing от англ. phone – «телефон» и snubbing – «пренебрежительное отношение»). Такое поведение воздействует на человека в различных социальных условиях и оказывает глубокое влияние на межличностные отношения. В данной статье приводится анализ первых исследований по проблеме фаббинга с целью понять и описать природу и степень влияния этого феномена на различные социальные отношения в многомерной современной жизни.

Ключевые слова: фаббинг; смартфоны; взаимоотношения; коммуникация.

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