

# **PARTNER PHUBBING AND RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION AMONG MARRIED YOUNG ADULTS**

**A Research Project Submitted to Bengaluru North University, Bengaluru**

**Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the  
Master's Degree in Counselling Psychology**

**By**

**Ojal Jain H**

**P19HU21S0082**

Under the guidance of

**Ms. Yamini Gowda PC**

Assistant Professor



**OCTOBER 2023**

**Certificate**

This is to certify that **Ojal Jain H** is a student of Montfort College, doing her M.Sc. Counselling Psychology affiliated to Bangalore North University for the academic year 2021-2023.

This Research Project **Partner Phubbing and Relationship Satisfaction among Married Young Adults** submitted by the candidate in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of M.Sc. in Counselling Psychology has been carried out under my supervision. It embodies the results of her own research work, and it is a record of the candidate's personal efforts. This work has not been submitted anywhere else nor has it formed the basis for the award of any other degree or diploma to the candidate.

Date: 

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Place: Bangalore

Ms. Yamini Gowda PC

Date: 

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Place: Bangalore

Dr. Bro. Victor Raj  
Principal

**Declaration**

I, **Ojal Jain H** hereby declare that this Research Project **Partner Phubbing and Relationship Satisfaction among Married Young Adults** was carried out by me under the guidance of **Ms. Yamini Gowda PC**, Bangalore.

This Research Project is submitted in candidacy for the award of M.Sc. in Counselling Psychology to Bengaluru North University, in the month of October 2023. This research work or parts of it have not been submitted to any other University for any purpose so far. References borrowed from other sources have been duly acknowledged.

Date: 


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Place: Bangalore

Ojal Jain H

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### **Abstract**

The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction among married young adults. Survey method was used to collect data from 62 married individuals (36 women and 26 men) from Chennai and Bangalore. The tools used are Partner Phubbing Scale and Couple Satisfaction Index and the correlational research design was adopted. Spearman's rank correlation method was used to analyze the data as the data of relationship satisfaction was not normally distributed. The results indicated a strong negative correlation between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction, meaning that an increase in partner phubbing will lead to decrease in relationship satisfaction, and vice versa. Previous research studies showed mixed results. Hence, this study confirms that a negative relationship exists. Also, there is a dearth in the studies conducted on these variables in India. Thus, the results of this study are contextually pertinent to India, specifically Chennai and Bangalore. It can also be used for psychoeducation and counselling purpose to individuals and couples.

*Keywords:* partner phubbing, relationship satisfaction, married young adults, counselling

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# Introduction

### **Partner Phubbing And Relationship Satisfaction among Married Young Adults**

Navigating romantic relationships is a demanding task, especially in the presence of social allergens (Hutson, et al., 2001). Coined by Dr. Michael Cunningham, social allergens are “emotion-arousing behavior or situation created by another person that is seen as unpleasant, but not as unbearably aversive, by objective observers” (Cunningham et al., 2005). It works just like how physical allergies work. Initially, exposure to a certain stimulus produces small undesirable reactions. However, continuous exposure to particular stimuli may result in intense negative reactions (Roberts & David, 2022). Simply put, social allergens are undesirable habits whose frequency increases with the length of the relationship.

Seemingly minor during the initial phase of a romantic relationship, they can become major blocks to a healthy relationship in the future. This process can be better explained through the repetition sensitization mechanism. When a spouse engages in an unpleasant activity, this behavioral stimulus may trigger memories of earlier, comparable instances, along with the feelings that went along with them. A sensation of more intense negative effects may result from the combination of the emotion currently produced by the unpleasant conduct, the recalled earlier emotions, and any other negative emotion from the day's events. This feeling was not initially produced by the behavior alone. The subsequent association between the allergic behavioral stimulus and the person's overall negative affect results in a stronger future conditioned negative emotional reaction to the allergen (Cunningham et al., 2005).

One of the most prevalent social allergens is phubbing (Al-Saggaf & O'Donnell, 2019). The terms ‘phone’ and ‘snubbing’ are combined to form ‘phubbing.’ It means “neglecting someone else by glancing at it or using a smartphone from time to time during a face-to-face conversation” (Karadağ et al., 2015). Similarly, partner phubbing is defined as

the “perceived extent to which your romantic partner uses or is distracted by his/her cell phone while in your company” (Roberts & David, 2022). Two main characters can be distinguished in partner phubbing, namely, the phubber and the phubbee. The phubber is the one engaging in the act of using their mobile phone in the company of others. The phubbee is the one who is being snubbed by the mobile phone user (Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas, 2016).

The concept of phubbing has gained attention with the increase in the usage of smartphones (Zhan, et al., 2022). According to Indian Express, over 600 million citizens of the country own a smartphone in the first quarter of 2023. They spend 4.9 hours daily on their smartphones, according to Times of India. Phubbing is not only associated with mobile addiction, but is also used as a tool in circumstances such as loneliness, worry or anxiety. Phubbing can also be looked at from the perspective of being an avoidance behaviour.

Oftentimes, people intentionally used their smartphone to avoid communicating with the people around them (Zhan et al., 2022). It also produces resentful emotional responses (Guazzini et al., 2021), perceived lower quality of interaction (Rainie & Zickuhr, 2015), reduced trust in their interaction partners (Cameron & Webster, 2011), discontentment with the interaction partner (Abeeel et al., 2016), and jealousy about their phone use (Krasnova et al., 2016). Research has also indicated that partner phubbing negatively affects romantic relationship satisfaction among couples, especially amongst those who aren't already satisfied in their relationship (Roberts & David, 2016). Its presence not only decreases relationship satisfaction but also leads to the termination of the marriage (Cunningham et al., 2005).

Relationship satisfaction, as the words suggest, is the extent to which one partner is successfully able to meet the needs and wants of the other partner (Peleg, 2008). It involves the holistic assessment of the romantic relationship done by the individual (Funk & Rogge, 2007). Measuring the quality of romantic relationships is critical (Zhan et al., 2022) as it is

related to relationship commitment, reward, investment cost, (Sabatelli, 1998), and level of relationship stability (While, 1999). It is essential for romantic partners to have a connection between them (Roberts & David, 2016). Additionally, for a relationship to be mutually rewarding, the partners must remain attentive and open to the other in the absence of any internal or external disturbances (Siegel, 2010).

From the above-mentioned distractions, it is clear that partner phubbing diminishes relationship satisfaction. The boundary separating romantic relationships and other interests have increasingly blurred due to the growing usage of cell phones (Chesley, 2005; Leggett & Rossouw, 2014). It threatens the basic human need for control and attachment when they sense that their partner is not present for them (Roberts & David, 2016). It is crucial to be present for one's romantic partner as it determines how the partner perceives their relationship (McDaniel & Drouin, 2019).

### **Theoretical Framework**

Partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction can be best explained using the “displacement hypothesis”. It suggests that the time that individuals spend on their smartphone displaces or substitutes the quality time that they could have instead spent with their partners (Valkenburg and Peter, 2007). Not being present and not spending quality interaction time due to smartphone related distractions significantly reduces relationship satisfaction (Roberts & David, 2016).

Another theory that can be used to explain this relationship is the “symbolic interactionism theory” (Halpern and Katz 2017). According to this theory, “individuals interactively use symbols to develop a sense of themselves, their roles, and their relationship with others” (Denzin 1992; Halpern and Katz 2017; Stryker 1999). Precisely, the interactions that individuals have with others are influenced by certain meanings they associate it with. These meanings can be handled or modified based on their interpretation of the interaction

(Denzin 1992; Halpern and Katz 2017). For example, the use of mobile phones is prohibited in schools as it is interpreted as a sign of disrespect by the teachers. Likewise, if an individual's romantic partner uses their smartphone in their company, it would be interpreted as a sign of dissatisfaction with the relationship. Hence, these two theories can be used as strong grounds to say that partner phubbing has a negative effect on relationship satisfaction (Wang et al., 2021).

Negative emotions often conjure up feelings of exclusion at some levels. The Equity Theory helps in understanding how. According to Hatfield and Traupmann (1981), "equal investment in the relationship (rewards/costs) helps to maximise outcomes (satisfaction)." An individual perceives distress and strives to work harder when they sense unequal investment in the relationship. Experiencing phubbing by one's partner is an indicator of unequal investment from their side (Hatfield & Traupmann, 1981). Such experiences result in perceptions of lower partner responsiveness, low intimacy and greater feelings of exclusion (Beukeboom & Pollmann, 2021; McDaniel & Wesselmann, 2021; Vanden Abeele et al., 2019). Such perceptions may be seen as signs of personal deficits (Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas, 2018) such as the inability to hold one's partner's attention, therefore resulting in lowered esteem and well-being (McDaniel & Drouin, 2019; Wang et al., 2017). The Social Exchange Theory has a similar standpoint. It argues that relationships are based on interdependence and people are continuously comparing the cost against the benefits based on the action of their partners (Burgess & Huston, 2013).

Multiple research studies have been conducted in the past to examine the relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction, which have demonstrated a significant negative relationship among married individuals and unmarried couples (Beukeboom & Pollmann, 2021; Wang, et al, 2021 ; McDaniel & Coyne, 2014; Roberts &

David, 2016; Thomas et al, 2022; Zhan et al, 2022). This association has been studied in the light of various mediating and moderating variables.

### **Mediating and moderating variables**

Studies have looked at the mediating role of reduced passion, deromanticization (Roberts & David, 2021), feelings of exclusion, perceived intimacy (Beukeboom & Pollmann, 2021), conflict about phone use (Beukeboom & Pollmann, 2021; Roberts & David, 2016) and loneliness (Zhan et al, 2022), and have found them to play a significant role in the relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction. Certain moderating variables, such as gender, relationship length (Aljasir, 2022), attachment anxiety (Roberts & David, 2016), self-esteem, marital status (Wang et al, 2021) to understand the relationship between the two variables.

### **Need for and Importance of the current study**

Although literature has shown a negative relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction, there are studies that don't replicate the same results (Beukeboom & Pollmann, 2021). Cizmeci (2017) has indicated a positive relationship between these two variables. Due to the contradictory findings, it is important to study the relationship between these two variables (Beukeboom & Pollmann, 2021), which is also the aim of the current study. Therefore, we hypothesize that there is no significant relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction.

The literature on marital satisfaction has majorly been adapted from the western studies. Generalizing these findings among the Indian population could result in inaccurate conclusions due to differences in culture (Nayana & James, 2017). The stark difference in cultures makes it important to study the relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction among the Indian population. The current study will be conducted on married young adults in India as married adults were more affected by relationship problems

such as partner phubbing than unmarried adults (Wang, et al, 2021). Relationship satisfaction among young adults is declining as that current generation has high expectations from their partners and the hope to fulfil their needs. Since actual romantic relationships fall short of these expectations, it may result in a decline in the relationship satisfaction among young adults (Bühler et al., 2021).



## **Review of Literature**

### **Review of Literature**

The aim of this research is to study the relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction among married young adults.

This section contains research studies done to understand the relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction. Most studies in this section have been done in the past 7 years and have been looked at in the light of various mediating and moderating variables that may have impacted the relationship between the two variables.

A study was conducted in Texas by Roberts and David in 2016 to investigate phubbing behaviour and its impact on relationship satisfaction and personal well-being. The research was conducted on 145 adults. The results indicated that partner phubbing increases phone conflict which in turn reduces relationship satisfaction. Attachment styles also moderated this relationship. It was found that people with anxious attachment reported more phone conflict on being phubbed, therefore leading to lower levels of relationship satisfaction (Roberts & David, 2016).

A study on Partner Phubbing Behaviour and Relationship Satisfaction by Cizmeci was done in Turkey in 2017. The aim of the study was to compare perceived partner phubbing and the relationship satisfaction of people who are dating and currently married in Turkey. One of the hypotheses that was tested was that as partner phubbing increases, relationship satisfaction decreases. It was done on 500 adults. The sampling technique used was snowball sampling method and participants were given two scales, namely, the Partner Phubbing Scale, and the Relationship Satisfaction. T-test was used to analyze two groups and ANOVA to compare more than two groups in the demographic variables. Regression analysis was done to understand the impact of partner phubbing on relationship satisfaction. The results indicated a positive relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction, hence, rejecting the hypothesis (Cizmeci, 2017).

A study was conducted in Chile by Halpern and Katz in 2017 to test the theoretical model that explains the detrimental effects of texting on romantic relationships. It was proposed that frequent texting causes partners to attend to their cell phones rather than communicate with their significant other, lowering the perceived quality of a romantic relationship through two different processes. These two processes are: (1) problems that arise in relationships as a result of texting activity; and (2) a lack of closeness that results from texting activities that divert attention away from the romantic partner. One of the hypotheses proposed is that partner phubbing is negatively related to perceived quality of relationship and cell phone use conflicts mediate this relationship. Both hypotheses were accepted. A cross-lagged analysis of the two-wave sample shows that more texting is associated with lower perceptions of relationship quality. The claim that people in troubled relationships use their phones to avoid being with their partners is refuted by this relationship. Additionally, findings are consistent with the hypothesized model, which holds that both mediators—a lack of closeness and conflicts—have detrimental long-term impacts on perceived relationship quality (Halpern & Katz, 2017).

A study was conducted in Singapore by Abeele, et al., in 2019 to investigate the frequency, occurrence, and duration of partner phubbing during a dyadic conversation and its relationship with perceived conversation intimacy and distraction. 100 dyads (200 participants) took part in the study. Phubbing was evaluated by covertly recording 100 dyads of students conversing for 10 minutes. Following the session, participants were approached and asked to fill out surveys about how intimate and distracted they thought their past 10 minutes of chat had been. 62/100 dyads observed phubbing behaviour. Findings were inconsistent for the association between partner phubbing and perceived distraction. Partner's phone use was associated with lower conversation intimacy (Abeele, et al., 2019).

A study was conducted in the US by McDaniel, et al., in 2020 to evaluate the effects of individual, shared, and couple technology use on quality of relationship, satisfaction with couple time, and conflict over a period of ten days. It was done in 155 heterosexual adults. It was discovered that technology distraction predicted decreased satisfaction with leisure or time spent together and that perceptions of partner usage predicted greater conflict during leisure or time spent together. The final finding was that there may be a relationship between the use of technology and one's pleasure with or conflict during couple time spent together and leisure, and how this (dis)satisfaction and conflict affects the quality of daily relationships (McDaniel, et al., 2020).

A study was done in India by Johnson in 2020 to study the relationship between Phubbing, Partner Phubbing and Relationship Satisfaction. The proposed hypotheses were that there is no correlation between phubbing, partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction, phubbing and partner phubbing did not influence relationship satisfaction, and there is no significant difference among the three variables between married and romantic couples. It was done on 61 couples, married and unmarried. The tools used were Phubbing scale, The Partner Phubbing scale and Relationship Assessment Scale and data was collected using google forms and analysed using Pearson's correlation and t-test. Results revealed that there was a positive relationship between phubbing and partner phubbing and a negative relationship between phubbing and partner phubbing on relationship satisfaction. It was also found there was no significant difference between the variables among married and romantic couples (Johnson, 2020).

A study was done in South Africa in 2020 by Renckon to study the relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction in South African marriages. It was hypothesized that there is a negative relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction. The study was conducted on 40 married individuals through snowball sampling.

The tools used were the Partner Phubbing Scale and Couples Satisfaction Index and the gathered data was analysed using Pearson's correlation coefficient. The results of the study indicated there was a negative relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction (Renckon, 2020).

A study was done in Brazil in 2020 by Teixeira and Freire to study the influence of partner phubbing on subject wellbeing and romantic relationship satisfaction. It was done on 217 participants who answered phubbing scales, positive and negative effects, life satisfaction, relationship satisfaction scale, and sociodemographic questionnaire. The data gathered was analyzed using the SPSS software. The results postulated that those participants who experienced phubbing from their romantic partners were less satisfied with their romantic relationship and reported less subjective wellbeing (Teixeira & Freire, 2020).

A study was conducted in the Netherlands by Beukeboom and Pollmann in 2021 on understanding the relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction. The hypotheses proposed by the study were (1) there is a negative relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction, (2) the relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction is mediated by feelings of exclusion, perceived partner responsiveness, perceived intimacy, conflict about phone use, and feelings of jealousy, (3) the relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction is moderated by shared phone use, and (4) shared phone use moderates the mediations effects mentioned above. It was done it 507, who were approached on online platforms and by distributing questionnaires door to door. The tools used were the Partner Phubbing Scale, Relationship Assessment Scale, the Multidimensional Jealousy Scale, Quality of Marriage Index, Miller Social Intimacy Scale, and Partner Responsiveness Scale. The results indicated that all the above-mentioned hypotheses were accepted (Beukeboom & Pollmann, 2021).

A study was conducted in China by Wang, et al., in 2021 to investigate the moderating role of self-esteem and marital status on partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction. The study hypothesized that self-esteem (H1) and marital satisfaction (H2) will moderate the association between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction. It was conducted on 429 Chinese adults who were either married or unmarried but in a romantic relationship. The tools used were the Partner Phubbing Scale, and Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale. The results indicated that self-esteem moderates the association where people with higher self-esteem experience lower relationship satisfaction on being phubbed. A negative relationship was also found between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction among married people (Wang, et al., 2021).

A study was conducted in Portugal by Gomes, et al., in 2021 to investigate the impact of partner phubbing on relationship satisfaction and intimacy. It was conducted on 384 people who were selected through convenience sampling who were approached both online and in-person. The scales used were Phubbing Scale, Mobile Phone Usage Addiction Scale, Internet Addiction Scale, Social Media Addiction Scale, Game Addiction Scale, SMS Addiction Scale, Relationship Assessment Scale, and Psychological Intimacy Scale. It was found that communication problems and women's dependence on social media are aspects of phubbing that have an impact on fulfilment in a love relationship. Intimacy is closely linked to satisfaction in romantic relationships, which in turn is linked to the absence of communication problems (Gomes, et al., 2021).

A study was conducted in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia by Khodabakhsh, and Ong in 2021 to study the relationship between partner phubbing and marital quality and look at the moderating effects of age and gender on this association. The proposed hypotheses were that there is a significant relationship between partner phubbing and marital quality and this association is significantly moderated by age and gender. It was done on 390 people who

were recruited through convenience sampling. The tools used were the Partner Phubbing Scale and the Dyadic Adjustment Scale. Pearson's Correlation and Haye's SPSS macro-PROCESS were used for analysis. A negative relationship was established between partner phubbing and marital quality. The impact of partner phubbing on marital quality was more among women than men. The effect of partner phubbing on marital quality was the strongest among people aged 21-30 years and weakest for those aged 51-60 years (Khodabakhsh & Ong, 2021).

A study was conducted in Illinois, United States of America by McDaniel and Wesselmann in 2021 to study how attributional information influences the effects of phone use on feelings of exclusion and interaction quality in a face-to-face interaction. The proposed hypotheses were that being phubbed increases their feelings of exclusion and impacts their perception of the quality of the interaction, and giving reasons for phubbing changes the impact of phubbing on the participants. 99 participants were selected across the various course in Midwestern University. They were divided into 3 conditions – no phone use, important reason, and trivial reason. 2 mins into the conversation, the participant's interaction partner was asked to pull out their phone and give a trivial/important reason, while making adequate eye contact. Phubbed participants reported feeling a high sense of exclusion and less closeness. However, participants, whose partners gave an important reason, felt a lower sense of exclusion, and perceived their partner to be less distracted (McDaniel & Wesselmann, 2021).

A study was conducted in Wuhan, China by Zhan, et al., in 2022 to study the mediating effect of loneliness and the moderating effect of empathy on partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction. The study hypothesized that there is a negative relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction, loneliness mediates this relationship, empathy moderates this mediating relationship and higher the empathy, higher the negative correlation

between romantic relationship satisfaction and loneliness and more the phubbing behaviour. The study was done on 504 adults. The tools used were the Partner Phubbing Scale, Quality of Relationship Index, Loneliness Scale, and the Interpersonal Response Scale. The participants were approached online. The analysis used were Spearman correlation method, Model 4 in the PROCESS to test the mediating effects of loneliness and bootstrapping method to test the moderating effects of empathy. The results indicated that all the above-mentioned hypotheses were accepted. There was a significant negative relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction. Loneliness mediated this relationship as those with low relationship satisfaction perceived higher levels of loneliness, and hence indulged in more phubbing behaviour. For those with higher levels of empathy, less relationship satisfaction leads to more feelings of perceived loneliness and more phubbing behaviour (Zhan, et al., 2022).

A study was conducted in Southampton, United Kingdom by Thomas, et al., in 2022 to assess how people respond when they are phubbed and their motivation to engage in retaliatory behaviours. One of the hypotheses proposed by the study was that on the days people experience more phubbing, they report lower relationship satisfaction and higher levels of frustration and anger. The study was conducted on 75 participants who were recruited through social media, online platforms, and word of mouth. Results indicated that daily experience of partner phubbing led to lower levels of the phubbee's relationship satisfaction and greater levels of anger (Thomas, et al., 2022).

A study was conducted in Texas by Roberts and David in 2022 to study the association between partner phubbing and relationship length and the mediating role of passion, romanticization, and attachment anxiety in this association. It was done in two parts on 250 people who were recruited online. The tools used were the Partner Phubbing Scale by Roberts and David in 2016, Romantic Passion Scale, and Deromanticization Scale. Results



indicated that attachment anxiety and romantic passion mediate the association between relationship length and partner phubbing. Relationship length has a negative relationship with romantic passion, which is positively correlated with partner phubbing perceptions. Longer relationships are linked to reduced levels of attachment anxiety, which are linked to less perceived partner phubbing as a result (Roberts & David, 2022).

A study was conducted in Turkey by YAM in 2022 to study the moderating role of relationship satisfaction and perceived relationship quality on the association between partner phubbing and life satisfaction. The Satisfaction with Life Scale, the Relationship Assessment Scale, the Perceived Romantic Relationship Quality Scale, and the Partner Phubbing Scale were administered on 308 adults. Pearson's correlation, mediation analysis and structural equation analysis done to analyze the data. Results indicated that perceived relationship quality and relationship satisfaction mediate the association between partner phubbing and life satisfaction where individuals who were exposed to partner phubbing experienced reduced perceived relationship quality and relationship satisfaction, which also reduced their life satisfaction (YAM, 2022).

A study was done in Poland by Chmielik et al., in 2022 to examine the impact of phubbing, on the well-being of individuals in romantic relationships. The research focused on 200 adults, both men and women, in various types of relationships, including informal ones and marriages. Two aspects of phubbing, communication disturbance and phone obsession, were considered. The study used the Phubbing Scale, Self-Esteem Scale, and Relationship Assessment Scale. According to the research, women and people in informal relationships had higher degrees of phone obsession. Married couples typically had stronger connections and more self-esteem. Phubbing was linked to poorer levels of relationship satisfaction and self-esteem. The strength of these associations was varied by gender and relationship type. Moreover, important predictors of phubbing behavior included age, relationship length, self-

esteem, and relationship happiness. Overall, the study highlights the negative impacts of excessive phone use on our lives and identifies topics for additional investigation (Chmielik et al., 2022).

A study was conducted in the United Kingdom by Carnelley et al., in 2023 to investigate the association between partners' daily phubbing on day-to-day relationship quality and relationship quality after two months using a dyadic diary study. It was done on both, perceived partner phubbing and enacted daily phubbing behavior. The moderating role of attachment was also examined. It was done on 100 couples. The results revealed that daily perceived phubbing was negatively related to day-to-day relationship quality. However, the same did not hold true after two months. Moreover, perceived partner phubbing and one's own phubbing did not impact relationship quality after two months. Attachment anxiety and avoidance did moderate this relationship, but the directions of these effects were inconsistent (Carnelley et al., 2023).

A study was conducted in Liberia by Togar et al., in 2023 to predict whether partner phubbing leads to relationship satisfaction via mobile phone conflict. It was also hypothesized that phubbing by men is less likely to result in conflicts than women due to the existing power and income differences. It was done on 128 people. A direct relationship was found between women's phubbing behaviour and their partner's (men) relationship satisfaction. The phubbing behaviour of men and women was a predictor of their own and their partner's mobile phone conflict, which in turn led to decrease in relationship satisfaction. Power differences and income disparity between men and women also affected the relationship between partner phubbing, mobile phone conflict and relationship satisfaction. However, the strength of this relationship isn't strong enough to support the proposed hypothesis (Togar et al., 2023).

Based on the review of literature, most studies have demonstrated a significant negative relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction among married individuals and unmarried couples (Beukeboom & Pollmann, 2021; Wang, et al, 2021 ; McDaniel & Coyne, 2014; Roberts & David, 2016; Thomas et al, 2022; Zhan et al, 2022). However, studies have also shown the opposite (Cizmeci, 2017).

Studies have looked at the mediating role of reduced passion, deromanticization (Roberts & David, 2021), feelings of exclusion, perceived intimacy (Beukeboom & Pollmann, 2021), conflict about phone use (Beukeboom & Pollmann, 2021; Roberts & David, 2016) and loneliness (Zhan et al, 2022), and have found them to play a significant role in the relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction. Studies have also examined the role of certain moderating variables, such as gender, relationship length (Aljasir, 2022), attachment anxiety (Roberts & David, 2016), self-esteem, marital status (Wang et al, 2021) to understand the relationship between the two variables.

Although literature has shown a negative relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction, there are studies that don't replicate the same result. Cizmeci (2017) has indicated a positive relationship between these two variables. Hence, it is important to study the relationship between these two variables to better understand the effect (Beukeboom & Pollmann, 2021).

It was also found that married adults were more affected by relationship problems such as partner phubbing than unmarried adults (Wang, et al, 2021). During young adulthood, relationship satisfaction declines as that current generation has high expectations from their partners and the hope to fulfil their needs. Since actual romantic relationships fall short of these expectations, it may result in a decline in the relationship satisfaction among young adults (Bühler et al., 2021). Hence, the current study focuses to study the association between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction among married young adults.

Based on the current review of literature, the variables, partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction, have scantily been studied on the Indian population. The literature on marital satisfaction has majorly been adapted from the western studies. Generalizing these findings among the Indian population could result in inaccurate conclusions due to difference in culture (Nayana & James, 2017). Hence, it is important to study these variables on the Indian population to better understand their relationship among the married young adults in India and make the results more generalizable.

## **Methodology**

## **Methodology**

### **Aim:**

To study the relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction among married young adults.

### **Objective:**

To determine if there is a relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction.

### **Participants:**

#### ***Participant Characteristics:***

The sample consisted of 62 (36 women and 26 men) married young adults ranging from 24-35 years in the current study. Out of the total sample, 38 participants were residents of Chennai and 24 were residents of Bangalore. The mean age of the participants was 29.35 years who had been married for an average length of 3 years with no children. 16 of them belonged to the upper socioeconomic status while 46 belonged to the middle socioeconomic status.

#### ***Sampling procedure:***

Sixty two participants from Bangalore and Chennai ranging between the age group of 22-35 years participated in the study. The intended sample size was sixty. The sample consisted of heterosexual men and women assigned at birth. The sampling methods applied was non-probability convenience sampling method (Edgar & Manz, 2017) and participants were approached by going to residential societies. Informed consent was taken from the

participants, followed by which they were given the demographic form, the partner phubbing scale and couples satisfaction scale.

The following are the inclusion criteria:

- Participants should be between the age group of 22-35 years.
- Participants should be married for at least one year.
- Participants should be currently living with their partner.
- Participants should not have children at present.
- Participants should be fluent in written and spoken English
- Participants should be residing in Chennai or Bangalore.

The following are the exclusion criteria:

- Participants who are married but not living with their partners.
- Participants who are undergoing treatment for any physical or mental health illness.

### **Materials and Data Collection Measures:**

The Partner Phubbing Scale developed by Roberts and David in the year 2016 was used to measure the extent to which an individual is experiencing partner phubbing on a day to day basis in their romantic relationships. The scale has a reliability of 0.93 and has been validated and tested (Roberts & David, 2016).. The items are scored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (all the time). Higher the score, higher is the frequency of phubbing behaviour experienced with the partner (Zang et al., 2022).

The Couples Satisfaction Scale (CSI-16) is 16-item scale developed by Funk and Rogge in the year 2007. It is used to measure the relationship satisfaction of married, dating and cohabiting couples. It has an internal consistency of 0.98 and is validated and tested. The items are scored on a Likert scale. Total scores are obtained by adding all the scores. It

ranges from 0-81. Higher the score, higher the relationship satisfaction. However, a score below 51.5 indicates notable dissatisfaction (Rogge, 2007).

**Research Design:**

The research design used in this study is Correlational Research Design as the study aims at studying the relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction.

**Hypothesis:**

There is no significant relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction among married young adults.

**Variables:**

- Partner Phubbing
- Relationship Satisfaction

**Procedure:**

The population of the study are married young adults. They were reached out in residential societies. They were briefed about the objectives of the study to ensure that the participants understand the study. They are also briefed about the inclusion and exclusion criteria to make sure that they are an appropriate fit for the study. Informed consent was then taken from them, post which they are given the demographic form, partner phubbing scale and couples satisfaction scale. Data was collected using the survey method.

**Operational Definitions:**

- Partner Phubbing - “Partner phubbing is the extent to which your romantic partner or spouse uses or is distracted by his/her cell phone while in your company.” (Roberts & David, 2016)



- Relationship Satisfaction - “Relationship satisfaction to refer to an individual’s overall assessment of their romantic relationship.” (Funk & Rogge, 2007)

**Data Analysis:**

The data was first entered and coded in Microsoft Excel. Data cleaning was done to ensure that the data was accurate, consistent, and had no errors. No such responses were found. Hence, all sixty two responses were analysed using the SPSS 24 software. Descriptive statistics were used to obtain the mean and standard deviation. Since the data for relationship satisfaction was not normally distributed, Spearman’s Correlation Coefficient was used to analyse the relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction among married young adults. Microsoft Excel was also used for creating bar graphs and pie charts for the participants’ demographics.

**Ethics:**

The ethical considerations met in the present research are taking informed consent from the participants, debriefing them about confidentiality and research objectives and giving due credit to the authors of the researches that were used in the study. The identity of the participants was also protected by ensuring anonymity.

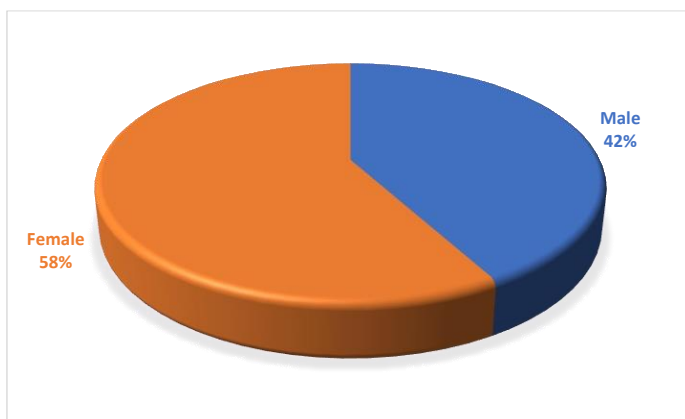
## **Results and Discussion**

## Results

This aim of this research is to study the relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction. This chapter contains the results of the correlational analysis conducted on the data collected to understand this relationship.

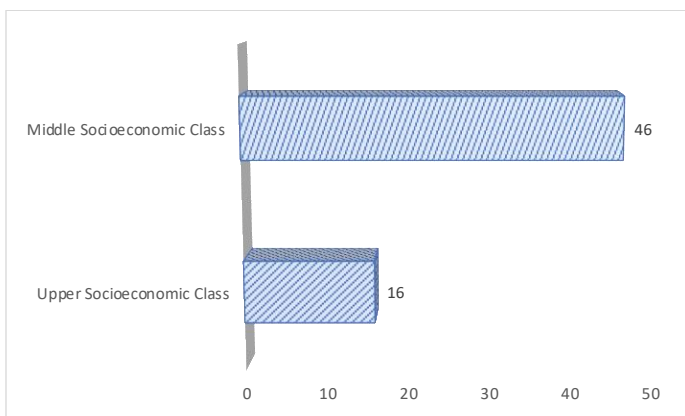
**Figure 1**

*Showing the gender distribution of the sample*



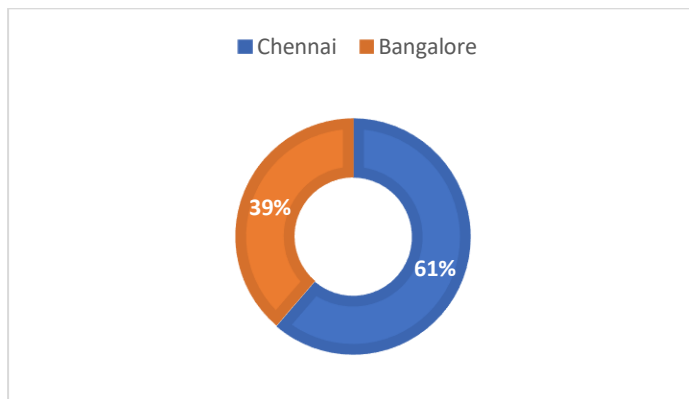
**Figure 2**

*Showing the socioeconomic status of the sample*



**Figure 3**

*Showing the place of residence of the sample*



The descriptive statistics show the distribution of the demographic variables in the study population (Table 1). In the study, (N = 62), 26 (41.9%) participants identify as male, and 36 (58.1%) participants identify as female. There were 46 (74.2%) participants who belonged to the middle socioeconomic status and 16 (25.8%) participants who belonged to the upper socioeconomic status. Out of the 62 participants, 38 (61.3%) of them resided in Chennai, while the other 24 (38.7%) resided in Bangalore.

**Table 1***Showing the mean, standard deviation, and range of the study variables*

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Range
Partner Phubbing	62	24.84	5.528	22
Relationship Satisfaction	62	68.53	11.437	52

The descriptive statistics show the mean, standard deviation, and range of the study variables in the study population (Table 2). The mean value to Partner Phubbing (N = 62) is 24.84 and the standard deviation is 5.528. This shows that the individual datasets are distributed far away from the mean. The range is 22. The mean value of Relationship Satisfaction (N = 62) is 68.53 and the standard deviation is 11.437. This again shows that the individual datasets are distributed far away from the mean. The range is 52.

**Table 2**

*Showing the normality test of the scale variables using Shapiro-Wilk test*

Hypothesis- The data is normally distributed.

Variable	Statistic	df	Significance
Partner Phubbing	0.976	62	0.257
Relationship Satisfaction	0.868	62	0.000

The significance values for Partner Phubbing and Relationship Satisfaction on Shapiro-Wilk test are 0.257 and 0.000, respectively (Table 3). Since the value of significance of Partner Phubbing is  $> p=0.05$ , the data for it is normally distributed. However, the value of significance of Relationship Satisfaction is  $< p=0.05$ , which indicates that the data for this variable is not normally distributed. Hence, the hypothesis for normality is accepted for partner phubbing but retained for relationship satisfaction.

**Figure 4**

*Showing scatter plot for correlation*

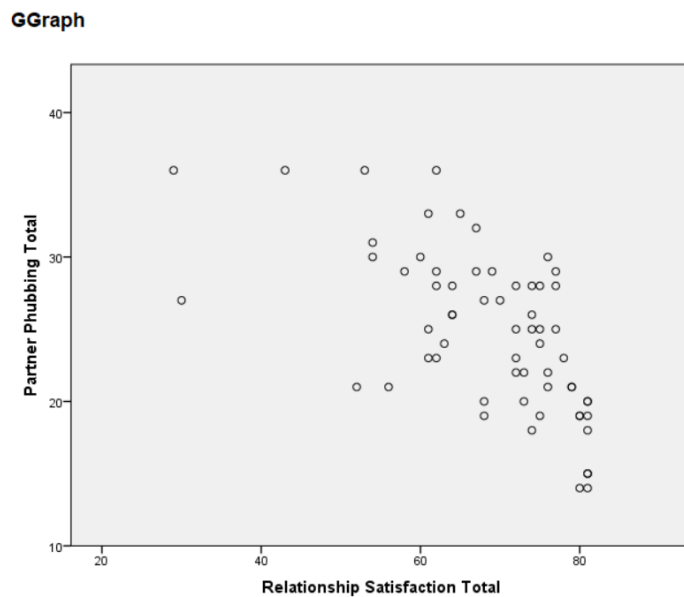


Figure 4 shows the data is showing a downhill pattern and the points are closely clustered, moving from top left to right. This indicates that the variables have a linear relationship.

**Table 3**

*Spearman's correlation values for the relationships between Partner Phubbing and Relationship Satisfaction*

Variable	Spearman's rho	Significance
Partner Phubbing and Relationship Satisfaction	-0.644**	0.000

\*\*p>0.01

Table 4 shows the correlation values of the study variables. The value of -0.644\*\* indicates that there is a negative relationship between Partner Phubbing and Relationship Satisfaction. This means that when Partner Phubbing increases, Relationship Satisfaction decreases, and vice versa. The relationship between the two study variables is statistically significant at 0.01 level. The closer the Spearman's rho to -1, the stronger the negative correlation. A value of -0.644 indicates a strong negative relationship between the two study variables.



### Discussion

All of us possess certain habits that bother our romantic partners, and these social allergens could have a significant impact on their relationship satisfaction if not timely attended to. Given the deeply rooted characteristic of smart phones in every aspect of modern day life and the seriousness of having a harmonious relationship, along with the purpose of applying the current body of knowledge of partner phubbing in India, it is important to study the association between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction. Hence, the current study aimed at studying the relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction among married young adults in the metropolitan cities of Chennai and Bangalore. Data was collected from 62 participants, and the proposed hypothesis was that there is no significant relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction ( $H_0$ ).

Data was entered on Microsoft Excel and cleaned. Bar graphs and pie charts for participants' demographics were created using the same. It was then transferred to SPSS 24, where it was subjected to test for normality. Since the data for relationship satisfaction was not normally distributed, Spearman's rank correlation coefficient was used to study the relationship. The correlation value was  $\rho = -0.644$  at 0.01 significance level. The findings of this study quantitatively show that in the 62 married young adults residing in Chennai and Bangalore, there exists a negative relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction, hence rejecting the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ).

The results of the study is also supported by previous research studies done in this area, which have shown that partner phubbing adversely affects relationship satisfaction among married young adults (Roberts & David, 2016; Johnson, 2020; Renckon, 2020; Teixeira & Freire, 2020; Beukeboom & Pollmann, 2021; Wang et al., 2021; Chmielik et al., 2022; Thomas et al., 2022; YAM, 2022; Zhan et al., 2022; Togar et al, 2023). However, there are studies that have shown conflicting results. Cizmeci (2017) has indicated that there

is a positive relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction, meaning that an increase in partner phubbing can result in an increase in relationship satisfaction, and vice versa.

The present study further contributes to the existence of a negative relationship between the study variables, thus confirming the experiences of those who perceive reduced relationship satisfaction on being phubbed by their spouse. Although the present finding is consistent with international studies, and there is a dearth in the studies conducted on these variables in India, the results of this study are contextually pertinent to India, specifically Chennai and Bangalore.

The present results are consistent with the theoretical models of symbolic interactionism theory and displacement hypothesis. According to the displacement theory (Valkenburg and Peter, 2007), people's time spent on smartphones replaces or displaces the quality time they could have spent with their spouses. According to the social interactionism theory, people's relationships with other people are shaped by the meanings they attach to them; these meanings can be handled or changed depending on how the person interprets the interaction (Denzin 1992; Halpern and Katz 2017). It is indication of dissatisfaction with a relationship when a person's romantic partner uses their smartphone when they are together. Hence, these two theories can be used as strong grounds to say that partner phubbing has a negative effect on relationship satisfaction (Wang et al., 2021), hence reducing their satisfaction with the relationship.

The descriptive statistics of the study show that the sample were of the age 24 years and older and majority of them have been married for 2 years. Among the 62 participants, 41.9% were male participants and 58.1% female participants, out of which 61.3% resided in Chennai and the remaining 38.7% resided in Bangalore. It is important to take into consideration that 74.2% of the population belonged to the middle socioeconomic status,

while only 25.8% of them were from the upper socioeconomic status. Furthermore, a majority of the sample was married for 2 years.

Since most of the studies done on partner phubbing is in the west, there is a dearth in the studies done under this domain in India. Hence, research on partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction and its obtained results help us in understanding the role of this social allergen in romantic relationships among the Indian population. The results obtained hold immense importance in the Indian context due to difference in culture, religion, ethnicity, perceptions of marriage, and expectations from a spouse.

The results obtained can also be used by counsellors to psycho-educate their clients on what phubbing is, and how it detrimentally affects their relationship with their spouse. Clients can be helped by creating awareness about phubbing and its implications, validating their experiences, assessing communication patterns, setting realistic goals and generating effective strategies for conflict resolution and to overcome phubbing.

## **Summary and Conclusions**

### **Summary and Conclusions**

The present study extends the research on romantic relationships by studying smart phone use. Distracted by smart phone use in the company of a romantic partner, called partner phubbing, is a social allergen. Social allergens are emotion arousing behaviours or situations that are perceived as unpleasant but not aversive. Phubbing by a partner in a romantic relationship may seem minor initially, but may cause major roadblocks in the relationship as it progresses.

Previous research studies have reflected upon the social allergens, such as partner phubbing and its serious implications on married couples than unmarried couples. Furthermore, literature also suggests that young adults have high expectations from their partners, and when they are not fulfilled, their satisfaction with the relationship diminishes. Additionally, studies conducted under the domain of partner phubbing have majorly been done in the west, which makes their results less generalisable to the Indian context. Hence, the current study focuses on investigating the association between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction on married young adults.

Using convenience sampling and snowball sampling, participants were approached in residential societies in Chennai and Bangalore. Data was collected from 62 participants between the age 24-35 years using the questionnaire method. It was then analysed using Spearman's rank correlation coefficient and a strong negative correlation was obtained. In conclusion, the study strongly confirms that an increase in partner phubbing will lead to a decrease in relationship satisfaction, and vice versa.

### **Limitations:**

There are some limitations to this study, however. First, since all the questionnaires were self-report measures, it is possible for social desirability bias to creep in. Additionally, it

could be a possibility that the dissatisfaction reported by the participant in the measures could be due to reasons other than phubbing. A social desirability tool should be included in the study to address this concern. It could also be that individuals report more phubbing on the days they are angry or dissatisfied with the relationship on a given day (Zhan, et al., 2022). Second, most of the participants were known to the researcher due to convenience sampling. Hence, there could have answered in a socially desirable manner due to their connections with the researcher.

Third, relationship dissatisfaction among adults could have been due to various factors other than partner phubbing (Thomas et al., 2022). The reader are requested to keep this in mind while reading the research paper. Forth, survey method was applied using pen and paper, hence limiting the researcher from collecting data from different parts of the country. Fifth, although the research focused on conducting this research in India, data was collected from limited states, reducing this generalizability.

Sixth, the current study has established a negative relationship between the study variables. However, the direction of the relationship was unknown. Finally, there is a lack of homogeneity in the sample with respect to socioeconomic status due to which the results might be biased. Furthermore, most participants were in the 'romantic stage' of their marriage, i.e., the initial 2 years. Since partners find the differences in each other 'cute and endearing', they could have a distorted perception of their partner's phubbing behaviour. This also could have led to the results be biased.

### **Recommendations:**

A mixed method study can be adopted. Participants can be asked open ended questions which could help to understand their behavioural and emotional responses to phubbing, along with quantitatively understanding their experience. Future research in this

area can focus on recruiting a larger sample from more cities in India to increase the generalizability of the study. Studies can also focus on understanding the causal relationship between these variables through regression. Since most of the participants were still in the 'romantic stage' of their marriage, a cross-sectional study can be done to understand the functioning of the study variables across various stages of marriage.

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## **Appendices**



**APPENDIX A****Consent Form**

I, **Ojal Jain H**, a student of 4<sup>th</sup> semester of Counselling Psychology in Montfort College, Bengaluru doing a psychological study on **Partner Phubbing and Relationship Satisfaction among Married Young Adults**. I would like you to participate in this study and I require your consent for the same. If you volunteer to participate in this study, I would require you to answer the questions in the following pages as accurately as possible.

The result of the study will be presented at Montfort College during my exams as a part of my Counselling Psychology course. Your identity will be kept confidential, only group data will be used. Your scores and name will be coded for follow-up study or re-analysing of data if the need arises.

If you wish to withdraw from the research, you may do so at any time without hesitation. The result of the study will be given to you after the completion of scoring. I assure you that your participation in this experiment will not cause you any psychological or physical harm.

If you have any doubts or clarifications, please feel free to ask me (ojal@montfortcollege.edu.in) or contact my research supervisor, **Ms. Yamini Gowda PC, Assistant Professor** ([yamini@montfortcollege.edu.in](mailto:yamini@montfortcollege.edu.in)), Montfort College, 184, Old Madras Road, Indiranagar, Bangalore - 560038.

If you consent to volunteer in my study, please indicate by filling in your name and signature below. Thank you.

Date:

Place:

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Ojal Jain H

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Date:

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Place: \_\_\_\_\_ Yamini Gowda PC  
\_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_ aged about  
\_\_\_\_\_ years, have accepted to voluntarily participate in this research and reserve my  
right to withdraw from the same at any time for any reason.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature of participant: \_\_\_\_\_  
Place: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of participant: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX B****Demographic Form**

Name /Initials of subject/ Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐

Educational Qualification: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship Status: \_\_\_\_\_ (if unmarried, kindly discontinue)

Length of Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_ (kindly discontinue if you haven't been married for at least one year)

No of children: \_\_\_\_\_

Socioeconomic Status: Upper ☐ Middle ☐ Lower ☐

Place of residence: \_\_\_\_\_

Living with the spouse: Yes ☐ No ☐ (If no, kindly discontinue)

Fluency in written and spoken English: Yes ☐ No ☐ (If no, then kindly discontinue)

Any chronic illnesses: Yes ☐ No ☐ (If yes, then please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

Any disability: No ☐ Yes ☐ (If yes, then please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

Any psychological problems: No ☐ Yes ☐ (If yes, then please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

**APPENDIX C****Partner Phubbing (Pphubbing) Scale**

**Instructions** - Indicate how frequently does your partner engage in each of the time behaviours that are related to his or her cell phone use. Response categories range from:

- 1 – Never
- 2 – Rarely
- 3 – Sometimes
- 4 – Often
- 5 – All the time

1. During a typical mealtime that my partner and I spend together, my partner pulls out and checks his/her cell phone. \_\_\_\_
2. 2. My partner places his or her cell phone where they can see it when we are together. \_\_\_\_
3. My partner keeps his or her cell phone in their hand when he or she is with me. \_\_\_\_
4. When my partner's cell phone rings or beeps, he/she pulls it out even if we are in the middle of a conversation. \_\_\_\_
5. My partner glances at his/her cell phone when talking to me. \_\_\_\_
6. During leisure time that my partner and I are able to spend together, my partner uses his/her cell phone. \_\_\_\_
7. My partner does not use his or her phone when we are talking. \_\_\_\_
8. My partner uses his or her cell phone when we are out together. \_\_\_\_
9. If there is a lull in our conversation, my partner will check his or her cell phone. \_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX D****Couple Satisfaction Index (CSI-16)**

**Instructions** - Please answer as accurately as possible.

1. Please indicate the degree of happiness, all things considered of your relationship.
  - ☐ 0
  - ☐ 1
  - ☐ 2
  - ☐ 3
  - ☐ 4
  - ☐ 5
  - ☐ 6
2. In general, how often do you think that things between you and your partner are going well?
  - ☐ 5
  - ☐ 4
  - ☐ 3
  - ☐ 2
  - ☐ 1
  - ☐ 0
3. Our relationship is strong.
  - ☐ 0
  - ☐ 1
  - ☐ 2
  - ☐ 3
  - ☐ 4

☐ 5

4. My relationship with my partner makes me happy.

☐ 0

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5

5. I have a warm and a comfortable relationship with my partner.

☐ 0

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5

6. I feel like part of a team with my partner.

☐ 0

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5

7. How rewarding is your relationship with your partner?

- ☐ 0
- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5

8. How well does your partner meet your needs?

- ☐ 0
- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5

9. To what extent has your relationship met your original expectations?

- ☐ 0
- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5

10. In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?

- ☐ 0
- ☐ 1

- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

For each of the following items, select the answer that best describes how you feel about your relationship. Base your responses on your first impressions and immediate feelings about the item.

11. INTERESTING	5	4	3	2	1	0	BORING
12. BAD	0	1	2	3	4	5	GOOD
13. FULL	5	4	3	2	1	0	EMPTY
14. STURDY	5	4	3	2	1	0	FRAGILE
15. DISCOURGING	0	1	2	3	4	5	HOPEFUL
16. ENJOYBLE	5	4	3	2	1	0	MISERABLE



## **Plagiarism Report**

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Total Words:	998
Total Characters:	6631
Plagiarized Sentences:	0
Unique Sentences:	47 (100%)

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Navigating romantic relationships is a demanding task, especially in the presence of social allergens (Hutson, et al., 2001). Coined by Dr. Michael Cunningham, social allergens are “emotion-arousing behavior or situation created by another person that is seen as unpleasant, but not as unbearably aversive, by objective observers” (Cunningham et al., 2005). It works just like how physical allergies work. Initially, exposure to a certain stimulus produces small undesirable reactions. However, continuous exposure to particular stimuli may result in intense negative reactions (Roberts & David, 2022). Simply put, social allergens are undesirable habits whose frequency increases with the length of the relationship. Seemingly minor during the initial phase of a romantic relationship, they can become major blocks to a healthy relationship in the future. This process can be better explained through the repetition sensitization mechanism. When a spouse engages in an unpleasant activity, this behavioral stimulus may trigger memories of earlier, comparable instances, along with the feelings that went along with them. A sensation of more intense negative effects may result from the combination of the emotion currently produced by the unpleasant conduct, the recalled earlier emotions, and any other negative emotion from the day's events. This feeling was not initially produced by the behavior alone. The subsequent association between the allergic behavioral stimulus and the person's overall negative affect results in a stronger future conditioned negative emotional reaction to the allergen (Cunningham et al., 2005).

One of the most prevalent social allergens is phubbing (Al-Saggaf & O'Donnell, 2019). The terms ‘phone’ and ‘snubbing’ are combined to form ‘phubbing.’ It means “neglecting someone else by glancing at it or using a smartphone from time to time during a face-to-face conversation” (Karadağ et al., 2015). Similarly, partner phubbing is defined as the “perceived extent to which your romantic partner uses or is distracted by his/her cell phone while in your company” (Roberts & David, 2022). Two main characters can be distinguished in partner phubbing, namely, the phubber and the phubbee. The phubber is the one engaging in the act of using their mobile phone in the company of others. The phubbee is the one who is being snubbed by the mobile phone user (Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas, 2016).

The concept of phubbing has gained attention with the increase in the usage of smartphones (Zhan, et al., 2022). According to Indian Express, over 600 million citizens of the country own a smartphone in the first quarter of 2023. They spend 4.9 hours daily on their smartphones, according to Times of India. Phubbing is not only associated with mobile addiction, but is also used as a tool in circumstances such as loneliness, worry or anxiety. Phubbing can also be looked at from the perspective of being an avoidance behaviour.

Oftentimes, people intentionally used their smartphone to avoid communicating with the people around them (Zhan et al., 2022). It also produces resentful emotional responses (Guazzini et al., 2021), perceived lower quality of interaction (Rainie & Zickuhr, 2015), reduced trust in their interaction partners (Cameron & Webster, 2011), discontentment with the interaction partner (Abeele et al., 2016), and jealousy about their phone use (Krasnova et al., 2016). Research has also indicated that partner phubbing negatively affects romantic relationship satisfaction among couples, especially amongst those who aren't already satisfied in their relationship (Roberts & David, 2016). Its presence not only decreases relationship satisfaction but also leads to the termination of the marriage (Cunningham et al., 2005).

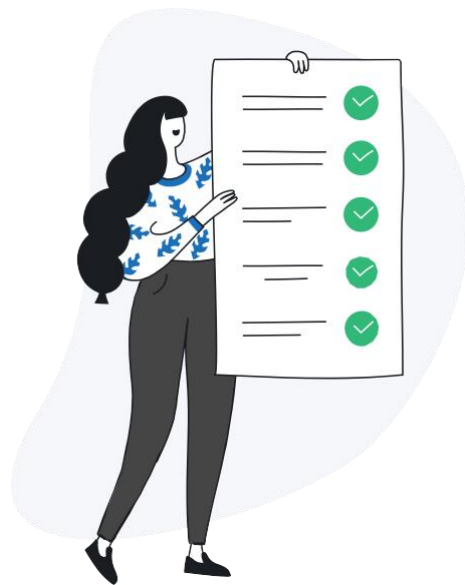
Relationship satisfaction, as the words suggest, is the extent to which one partner is successfully able to meet the needs and wants of the other partner (Peleg, 2008). It involves the holistic assessment of the romantic relationship done by the individual (Funk & Rogge, 2007). Measuring the quality of romantic relationships is critical (Zhan et al., 2022) as it is related to relationship commitment, reward, investment cost, (Sabatelli, 1998), and level of relationship stability (While, 1999). It is essential for romantic partners

to have a connection between them (Roberts & David, 2016). Additionally, for a relationship to be mutually rewarding, the partners must remain attentive and open to the other in the absence of any internal or external disturbances (Siegel, 2010).

From the above-mentioned distractions, it is clear that partner phubbing diminishes relationship satisfaction. The boundary separating romantic relationships and other interests have increasingly blurred due to the growing usage of cell phones (Chesley, 2005; Leggett & Rossouw, 2014). It threatens the basic human need for control and attachment when they sense that their partner is not present for them (Roberts & David, 2016). It is crucial to be present for one's romantic partner as it determines how the partner perceives their relationship (McDaniel & Drouin, 2019).

Partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction can be best explained using the "displacement hypothesis". It suggests that the time that individuals spend on their smartphone displaces or substitutes the quality time that they could have instead spent with their partners (Valkenburg and Peter, 2007). Not being present and not spending quality interaction time due to smartphone related distractions significantly reduces relationship satisfaction (Roberts & David, 2016).

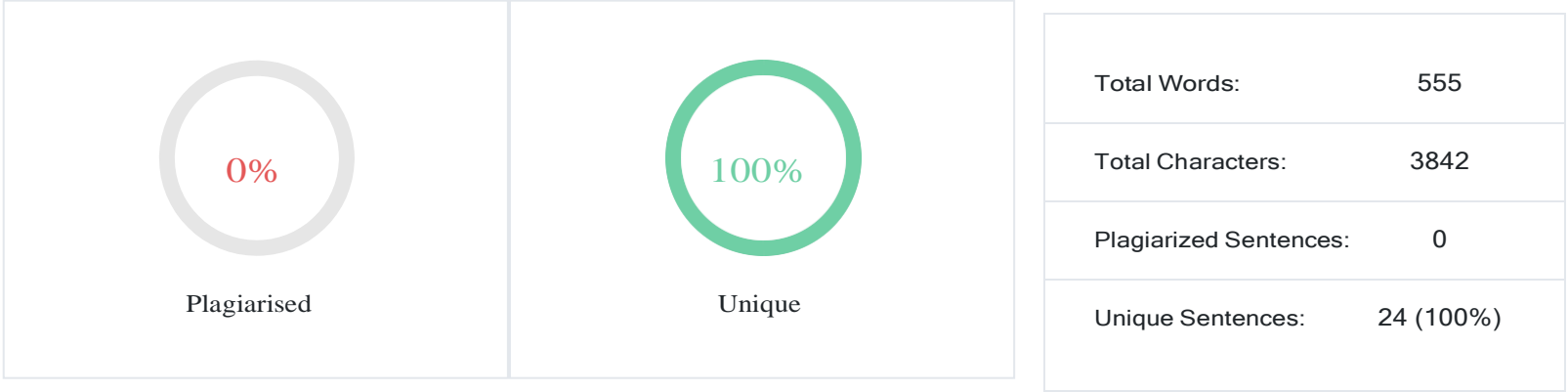
Another theory that can be used to explain this relationship is the "symbolic interactionism theory" (Halpern and Katz 2017). According to this theory, "individuals interactively use symbols to develop a sense of themselves, their roles, and their relationship with others" (Denzin 1992; Halpern and Katz 2017; Stryker 1999). Precisely, the interactions that individuals have with others are influenced by certain meanings they associate it with. These meanings can be handled or modified based on their interpretation of the interaction (Denzin 1992; Halpern and Katz 2017). For example, the use of mobile phones is prohibited in schools as it is interpreted as a sign of disrespect by the teachers. Likewise, if an individual's romantic partner uses their smartphone in their company, it would be interpreted as a sign of dissatisfaction with the relationship. Hence, these two theories can be used as strong grounds to say that partner phubbing has a negative effect on relationship satisfaction (Wang et al., 2021).



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Negative emotions often conjure up feelings of exclusion at some levels. The Equity Theory helps in understanding how. According to Hat eld and Traupmann (1981), “equal investment in the relationship (rewards/costs) helps to maximise outcomes (satisfaction).” An individual perceives distress and strives to work harder when they sense unequal investment in the relationship. Experiencing phubbing by one’s partner is an indicator of unequal investment from their side (Hat eld & Traupmann, 1981). Such experiences result in perceptions of lower partner responsiveness, low intimacy and greater feelings of exclusion (Beukeboom & Pollmann, 2021; McDaniel & Wesselmann, 2021; Vanden Abeele et al., 2019). Such perceptions may be seen as signs of personal de cits (Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas, 2018) such as the inability to hold one’s partner’s attention, therefore resulting in lowered esteem and well-being (McDaniel & Drouin, 2019; Wang et al., 2017). The Social Exchange Theory has a similar standpoint. It argues that relationships are based on interdependence and people are continuously comparing the cost against the bene ts based on the action of their partners (Burgess & Huston, 2013).

Multiple research studies have been conducted in the past to examine the relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction, which have demonstrated a signi cant negative relationship among married individuals and unmarried couples (Beukeboom & Pollmann, 2021; Wang, et al, 2021 ; McDanial & Coyne, 2014; Roberts & David, 2016; Thomas et al, 2022; Zhan et al, 2022). This association has been studied in the light of various mediating and moderating variables.

Studies have looked at the mediating role of reduced passion, deromanticization (Roberts & David, 2021), feelings of exclusion, perceived intimacy (Beukeboom & Pollmann, 2021), con ict about phone use (Beukeboom & Pollmann, 2021; Roberts & David, 2016) and loneliness (Zhan et al, 2022), and have found them to play a signi cant role in the relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction. Certain moderating variables, such as gender, relationship length (Aljasir, 2022), attachment anxiety (Roberts & David, 2016), self-esteem, marital status (Wang et al, 2021) to understand the relationship between the two variables.

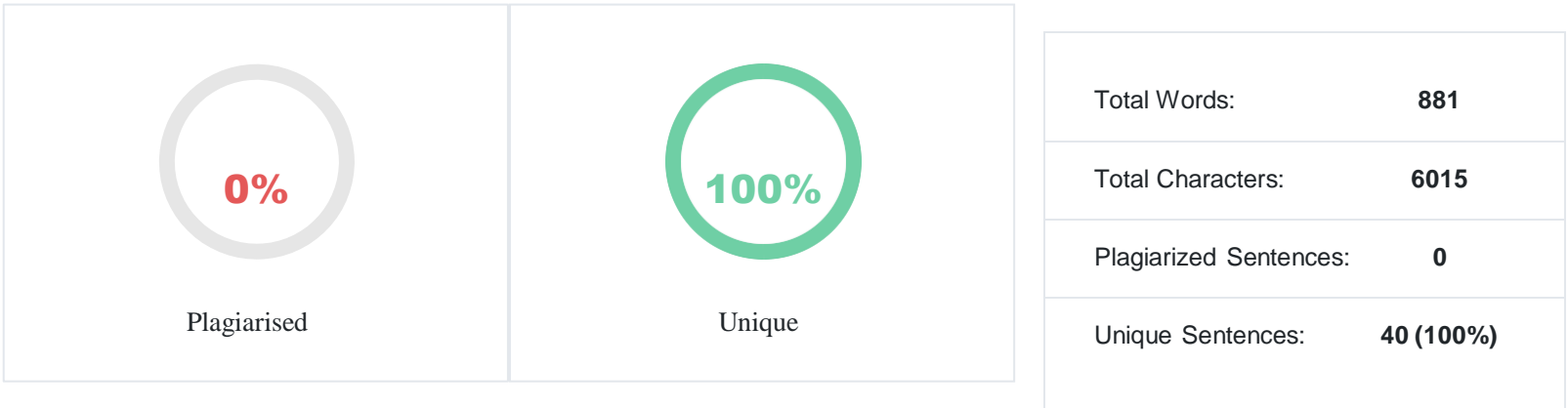
Although literature has shown a negative relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction, there are studies that don’t replicate the same results (Beukeboom & Pollmann, 2021). Cizmeci (2017) has indicated a positive relationship between these two variables. Due to the contradictory ndings, it is important to study the relationship between these two variables (Beukeboom & Pollmann, 2021), which is also the aim of the current study. Therefore, we hypothesize that there is no signi cant relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction.

The literature on marital satisfaction has majorly been adapted from the western studies. Generalizing these ndings among the Indian population could result in inaccurate conclusions due to differences in culture (Nayana & James, 2017). The stark difference in cultures makes it important to study the relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction among the Indian population. The current study will be conducted on married young adults in India as married adults were more affected by relationship problems such as partner phubbing than unmarried adults (Wang, et al, 2021).

Relationship satisfaction among young adults is declining as that current generation has high expectations from their partners and the hope to ful l their needs. Since actual romantic relationships fall short of these expectations, it may result in a decline in the relationship satisfaction among young adults (Bühler et al., 2021).

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A study was conducted in Texas by Roberts and David in 2016 to investigate phubbing behaviour and its impact on relationship satisfaction and personal well-being. The research was conducted on 145 adults. The results indicated that partner phubbing increases phone conflict which in turn reduces relationship satisfaction. Attachment styles also moderated this relationship. It was found that people with anxious attachment reported more phone conflict on being phubbed, therefore leading to lower levels of relationship satisfaction (Roberts & David, 2016).

A study on Partner Phubbing Behaviour and Relationship Satisfaction by Cizmeci was done in Turkey in 2017. The aim of the study was to compare perceived partner phubbing and the relationship satisfaction of people who are dating and currently married in Turkey. One of the hypotheses that was tested was that as partner phubbing increases, relationship satisfaction decreases. It was done on 500 adults. The sampling technique used was snowball sampling method and participants were given two scales, namely, the Partner Phubbing Scale, and the Relationship Satisfaction. T-test was used to analyze two groups and ANOVA to compare more than two groups in the demographic variables. Regression analysis was done to understand the impact of partner phubbing on relationship satisfaction. The results indicated a positive relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction, hence, rejecting the hypothesis (Cizmeci, 2017).

A study was conducted in Chile by Halpern and Katz in 2017 to test the theoretical model that explains the detrimental effects of texting on romantic relationships. It was proposed that frequent texting causes partners to attend to their cell phones rather than communicate with their significant other, lowering the perceived quality of a romantic relationship through two different processes. These two processes are: (1) problems that arise in relationships as a result of texting activity; and (2) a lack of closeness that results from texting activities that divert attention away from the romantic partner. One of the hypotheses proposed is that partner phubbing is negatively related to perceived quality of relationship and cell phone use conflicts mediate this relationship. Both hypotheses were accepted. A cross-lagged analysis of the two-wave sample shows that more texting is associated with lower perceptions of relationship quality. The claim that people in troubled relationships use their phones to avoid being with their partners is refuted by this relationship. Additionally, findings are consistent with the hypothesized model, which holds that both mediators—a lack of closeness and conflicts—have detrimental long-term impacts on perceived relationship quality (Halpern & Katz, 2017).

A study was conducted in Singapore by Abeele, et al., in 2019 to investigate the frequency, occurrence, and duration of partner phubbing during a dyadic conversation and its relationship with perceived conversation intimacy and distraction. 100 dyads (200 participants) took part in the study. Phubbing was evaluated by covertly recording 100 dyads of students conversing for 10 minutes. Following the session, participants were approached and asked to fill out surveys about how intimate and distracted they thought their past 10 minutes of chat had been. 62/100 dyads observed phubbing behaviour. Findings were inconsistent for the association between partner phubbing and perceived distraction. Partner's phone use was associated with lower conversation intimacy (Abeele, et al., 2019).

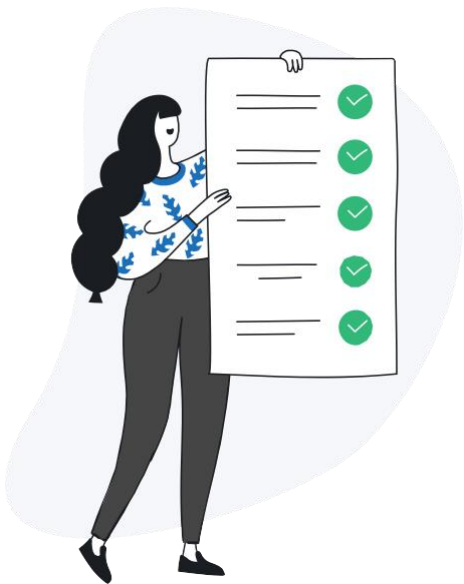
A study was conducted in the US by McDaniel, et al., in 2020 to evaluate the effects of individual, shared, and couple technology use on quality of relationship, satisfaction with couple time, and conflict over a period of ten days. It was done in 155 heterosexual adults. It was discovered that technology distraction predicted decreased satisfaction with leisure or time spent together and that perceptions of partner usage predicted greater conflict during leisure or time spent together. The final finding was that there may be a relationship between the use of technology and one's pleasure with or conflict during couple time spent



together and leisure, and how this (dis)satisfaction and conflict affects the quality of daily relationships (McDaniel, et al., 2020).

A study was done in India by Johnson in 2020 to study the relationship between Phubbing, Partner Phubbing and Relationship Satisfaction. The proposed hypotheses were that there is no correlation between phubbing, partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction, phubbing and partner phubbing did not influence relationship satisfaction, and there is no significant difference among the three variables between married and romantic couples. It was done on 61 couples, married and unmarried. The tools used were Phubbing scale, The Partner Phubbing scale and Relationship Assessment Scale and data was collected using google forms and analysed using Pearson’s correlation and t-test. Results revealed that there was a positive relationship between phubbing and partner phubbing and a negative relationship between phubbing and partner phubbing on relationship satisfaction. It was also found there was no significant difference between the variables among married and romantic couples (Johnson, 2020).

A study was done in South Africa in 2020 by Renckon to study the relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction in South African marriages. It was hypothesized that there is a negative relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction. The study was conducted on 40 married individuals through snowball sampling. The tools used were the Partner Phubbing Scale and Couples Satisfaction Index and the gathered data was analysed using Pearson’s correlation coefficient. The results of the study indicated there was a negative relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction (Renckon, 2020).



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A study was done in Brazil in 2020 by Teixeira and Freire to study the influence of partner phubbing on subject wellbeing and romantic relationship satisfaction. It was done on 217 participants who answered phubbing scales, positive and negative effects, life satisfaction, relationship satisfaction scale, and sociodemographic questionnaire. The data gathered was analyzed using the SPSS software. The results postulated that those participants who experienced phubbing from their romantic partners were less satisfied with their romantic relationship and reported less subjective wellbeing (Teixeira & Freire, 2020).

A study was conducted in the Netherlands by Beukeboom and Pollmann in 2021 on understanding the relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction. The hypotheses proposed by the study were (1) there is a negative relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction, (2) the relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction is mediated by feelings of exclusion, perceived partner responsiveness, perceived intimacy, conflict about phone use, and feelings of jealousy, (3) the relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction is moderated by shared phone use, and (4) shared phone use moderates the mediations effects mentioned above. It was done on 507, who were approached on online platforms and by distributing questionnaires door to door. The tools used were the Partner Phubbing Scale, Relationship Assessment Scale, the Multidimensional Jealousy Scale, Quality of Marriage Index, Miller Social Intimacy Scale, and Partner Responsiveness Scale. The results indicated that all the above-mentioned hypotheses were accepted (Beukeboom & Pollmann, 2021).

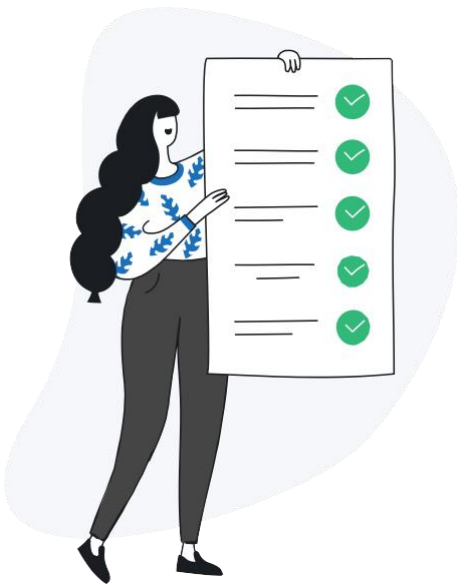
A study was conducted in China by Wang, et al., in 2021 to investigate the moderating role of self-esteem and marital status on partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction. The study hypothesized that self-esteem (H1) and marital satisfaction (H2) will moderate the association between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction. It was conducted on 429 Chinese adults who were either married or unmarried but in a romantic relationship. The tools used were the Partner Phubbing Scale, and Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale. The results indicated that self-esteem moderates the association where people with higher self-esteem experience lower relationship satisfaction on being phubbed. A negative relationship was also found between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction among married people (Wang, et al., 2021).

A study was conducted in Portugal by Gomes, et al., in 2021 to investigate the impact of partner phubbing on relationship satisfaction and intimacy. It was conducted on 384 people who were selected through convenience sampling who were approached both online and in-person. The scales used were Phubbing Scale, Mobile Phone Usage Addiction Scale, Internet Addiction Scale, Social Media Addiction Scale, Game Addiction Scale, SMS Addiction Scale, Relationship Assessment Scale, and Psychological Intimacy Scale. It was found that communication problems and women's dependence on social media are aspects of phubbing that have an impact on fulfillment in a love relationship. Intimacy is closely linked to satisfaction in romantic relationships, which in turn is linked to the absence of communication problems (Gomes, et al., 2021).

A study was conducted in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia by Khodabakhsh, and Ong in 2021 to study the relationship between partner phubbing and marital quality and look at the moderating effects of age and gender on this association. The proposed hypotheses were that there is a significant relationship between partner phubbing and marital quality and this association is significantly moderated by age and gender. It was done on 390 people who were recruited through convenience sampling. The tools used were the Partner Phubbing Scale and the Dyadic Adjustment Scale. Pearson's Correlation and Haye's SPSS macro- PROCESS were used for analysis. A negative relationship was established between

partner phubbing and marital quality. The impact of partner phubbing on marital quality was more among women than men. The effect of partner phubbing on marital quality was the strongest among people aged 21-30 years and weakest for those aged 51-60 years (Khodabakhsh & Ong, 2021). A study was conducted in Illinois, United States of America by McDaniel and Wesselmann in 2021 to study how attributional information influences the effects of phone use on feelings of exclusion and interaction quality in a face-to-face interaction. The proposed hypotheses were that being phubbed increases their feelings of exclusion and impacts their perception of the quality of the interaction, and giving reasons for phubbing changes the impact of phubbing on the participants. 99 participants were selected across the various courses in Midwestern University. They were divided into 3 conditions - no phone use, important reason, and trivial reason. 2 mins into the conversation, the participant's interaction partner was asked to pull out their phone and give a trivial/important reason, while making adequate eye contact. Phubbed participants reported feeling a high sense of exclusion and less closeness. However, participants, whose partners gave an important reason, felt a lower sense of exclusion, and perceived their partner to be less distracted (McDaniel & Wesselmann, 2021).

Study was conducted in Wuhan, China by Zhan, et al., in 2022 to study the mediating effect of loneliness and the moderating effect of empathy on partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction. The study hypothesized that there is a negative relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction, loneliness mediates this relationship, empathy moderates this mediating relationship and higher the empathy, higher the negative correlation between romantic relationship satisfaction and loneliness and more the phubbing behaviour. The study was done on 504 adults. The tools used were the Partner Phubbing Scale, Quality of Relationship Index, Loneliness Scale, and the Interpersonal Response Scale. The participants were approached online. The analysis used were Spearman correlation method, Model 4 in the PROCESS to test the mediating effects of loneliness and bootstrapping method to test the moderating effects of empathy. The results indicated that all the above-mentioned hypotheses were accepted. There was a significant negative relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction. Loneliness mediated this relationship as those with low relationship satisfaction perceived higher levels of loneliness, and hence indulged in more phubbing behaviour. For those with higher levels of empathy, less relationship satisfaction leads to more feelings of perceived loneliness and more phubbing behaviour (Zhan, et al., 2022).





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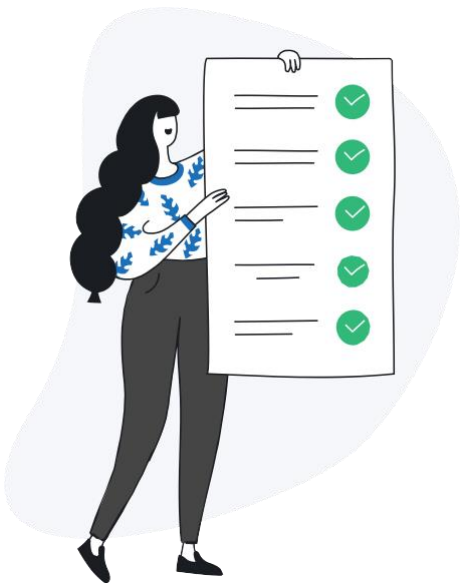
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higher levels of empathy, less relationship satisfaction leads to more feelings of perceived loneliness and more phubbing behaviour (Zhan, et al., 2022).

A study was conducted in Southampton, United Kingdom by Thomas, et al., in 2022 to assess how people respond when they are phubbed and their motivation to engage in retaliatory behaviours. One of the hypotheses proposed by the study was that on the days people experience more phubbing, they report lower relationship satisfaction and higher levels of frustration and anger. The study was conducted on 75 participants who were recruited through social media, online platforms, and word of mouth. Results indicated that daily experience of partner phubbing led to lower levels of the phubbee's relationship satisfaction and greater levels of anger (Thomas, et al., 2022).

A study was conducted in Texas by Roberts and David in 2022 to study the association between partner phubbing and relationship length and the mediating role of passion, romanticization, and attachment anxiety in this association. It was done in two parts on 250 people who were recruited online. The tools used were the Partner Phubbing Scale by Roberts and David in 2016, Romantic Passion Scale, and Deromanticization Scale. Results indicated that attachment anxiety and romantic passion mediate the association between relationship length and partner phubbing. Relationship length has a negative relationship with romantic passion, which is positively correlated with partner phubbing perceptions. Longer relationships are linked to reduced levels of attachment anxiety, which are linked to less perceived partner phubbing as a result (Roberts & David, 2022).

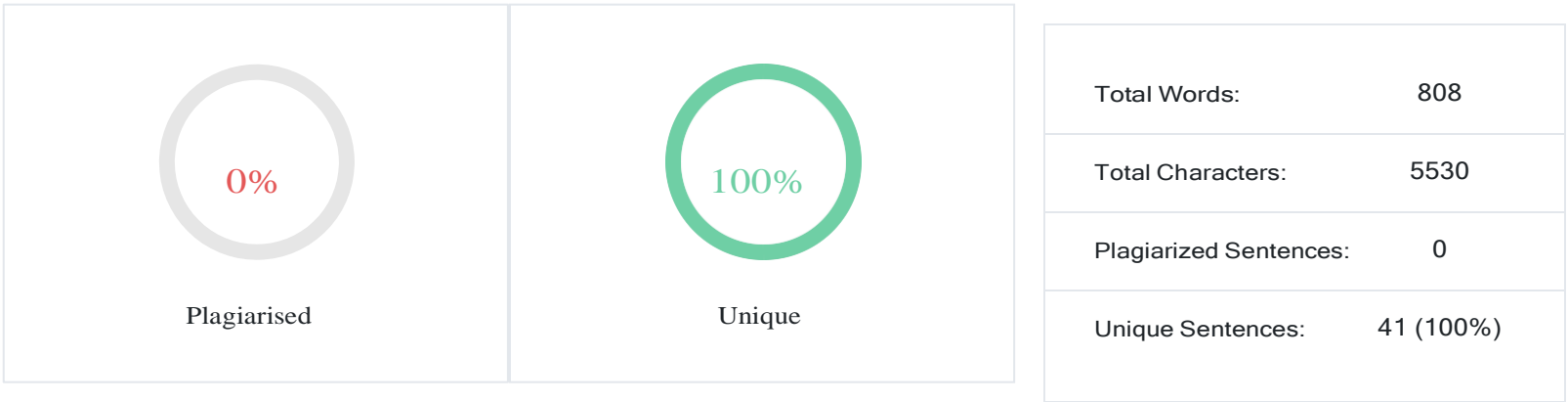
A study was conducted in Turkey by YAM in 2022 to study the moderating role of relationship satisfaction and perceived relationship quality on the association between partner phubbing and life satisfaction. The Satisfaction with Life Scale, the Relationship Assessment Scale, the Perceived Romantic Relationship Quality Scale, and the Partner Phubbing Scale were administered on 308 adults. Pearson's correlation, mediation analysis and structural equation analysis done to analyze the data. Results indicated that perceived relationship quality and relationship satisfaction mediate the association between partner phubbing and life satisfaction where individuals who were exposed to partner phubbing experienced reduced perceived relationship quality and relationship satisfaction, which also reduced their life satisfaction (YAM, 2022).



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A study was done in Poland by Chmielik et al., in 2022 to examine the impact of phubbing, on the well-being of individuals in romantic relationships. The research focused on 200 adults, both men and women, in various types of relationships, including informal ones and marriages. Two aspects of phubbing, communication disturbance and phone obsession, were considered. The study used the Phubbing Scale, Self-Esteem Scale, and Relationship Assessment Scale. According to the research, women and people in informal relationships had higher degrees of phone obsession. Married couples typically had stronger connections and more self-esteem. Phubbing was linked to poorer levels of relationship satisfaction and self-esteem. The strength of these associations was varied by gender and relationship type. Moreover, important predictors of phubbing behavior included age, relationship length, self-esteem, and relationship happiness. Overall, the study highlights the negative impacts of excessive phone use on our lives and identifies topics for additional investigation (Chmielik et al., 2022).

A study was conducted in the United Kingdom by Carnelley et al., in 2023 to investigate the association between partners' daily phubbing on day-to-day relationship quality and relationship quality after two months using a dyadic diary study. It was done on both, perceived partner phubbing and enacted daily phubbing behavior. The moderating role of attachment was also examined. It was done on 100 couples. The results revealed that daily perceived phubbing was negatively related to day-to-day relationship quality. However, the same did not hold true after two months. Moreover, perceived partner phubbing and one's own phubbing did not impact relationship quality after two months. Attachment anxiety and avoidance did moderate this relationship, but the directions of these effects were inconsistent (Carnelley et al., 2023).

A study was conducted in Liberia by Togar et al., in 2023 to predict whether partner phubbing leads to relationship satisfaction via mobile phone contact. It was also hypothesized that phubbing by men is less likely to result in contacts than women due to the existing power and income differences. It was done on 128 people. A direct relationship was found between women's phubbing behaviour and their partner's (men) relationship satisfaction. The phubbing behaviour of men and women was a predictor of their own and their partner's mobile phone contact, which in turn led to decrease in relationship satisfaction. Power differences and income disparity between men and women also affected the relationship between partner phubbing, mobile phone contact and relationship satisfaction. However, the strength of this relationship isn't strong enough to support the proposed hypothesis (Togar et al., 2023).

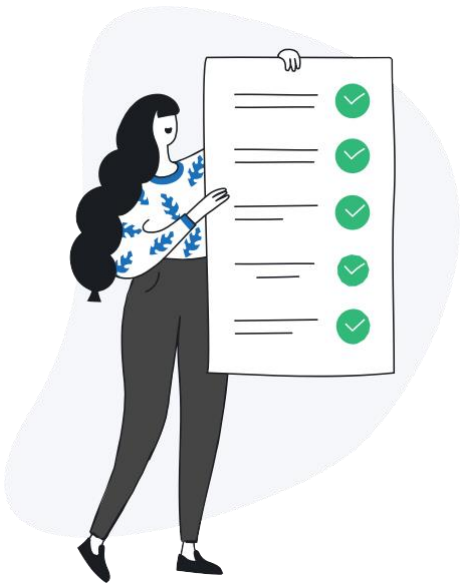
Based on the review of literature, most studies have demonstrated a significant negative relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction among married individuals and unmarried couples (Beukeboom & Pollmann, 2021; Wang, et al, 2021 ; McDaniel & Coyne, 2014; Roberts & David, 2016; Thomas et al, 2022; Zhan et al, 2022). However, studies have also shown the opposite (Cizmeci, 2017).

Studies have looked at the mediating role of reduced passion, deromanticization (Roberts & David, 2021), feelings of exclusion, perceived intimacy (Beukeboom & Pollmann, 2021), contact about phone use (Beukeboom & Pollmann, 2021; Roberts & David, 2016) and loneliness (Zhan et al, 2022), and have found them to play a significant role in the relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction. Studies have also examined the role of certain moderating variables, such as gender, relationship length (Aljasir, 2022), attachment anxiety (Roberts & David, 2016), self-esteem, marital status (Wang et al, 2021) to understand the relationship between the two variables.

Although literature has shown a negative relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction, there are studies that don't replicate the same result. Cizmeci (2017) has indicated a positive

relationship between these two variables. Hence, it is important to study the relationship between these two variables to better understand the effect (Beukeboom & Pollmann, 2021). It was also found that married adults were more affected by relationship problems such as partner phubbing than unmarried adults (Wang, et al, 2021). During young adulthood, relationship satisfaction declines as that current generation has high expectations from their partners and the hope to fulfil their needs. Since actual romantic relationships fall short of these expectations, it may result in a decline in the relationship satisfaction among young adults (Bühler et al., 2021). Hence, the current study focuses to study the association between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction among married young adults.

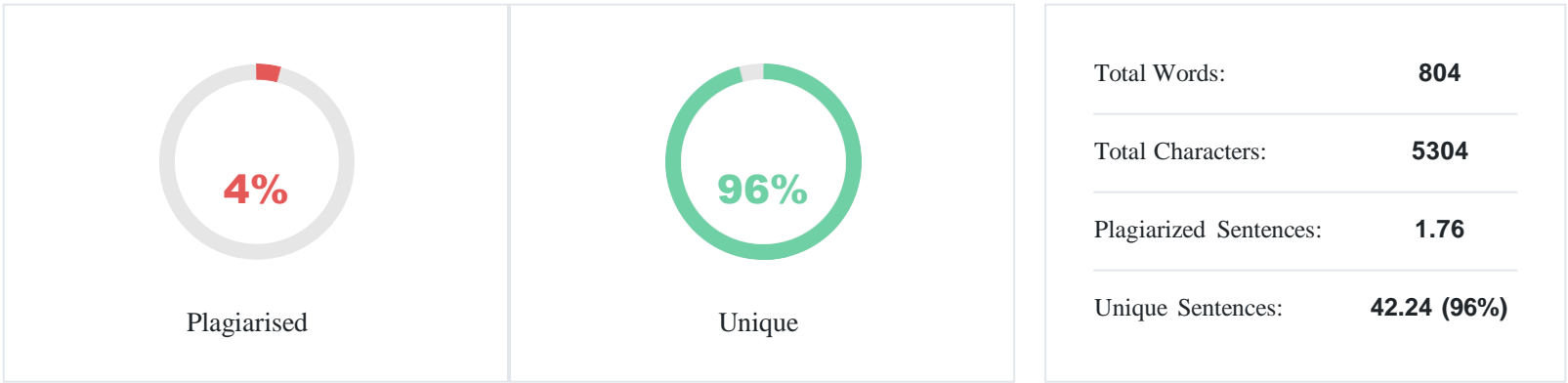
Based on the current review of literature, the variables, partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction, have scantily been studied on the Indian population. The literature on marital satisfaction has majorly been adapted from the western studies. Generalizing these findings among the Indian population could result in inaccurate conclusions due to difference in culture (Nayana & James, 2017). Hence, it is important to study these variables on the Indian population to better understand their relationship among the married young adults in India and make the results more generalizable.



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**Aim:**  
To study the relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction among married young adults.

**Objective:**  
To determine if there is a relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction.

**Participants:**  
**Participant Characteristics:**  
The sample consisted of 62 (36 women and 26 men) married young adults ranging from 24-35 years in the current study. Out of the total sample, 38 participants were residents of Chennai and 24 were residents of Bangalore. The mean age of the participants was 29.35 years who had been married for an average length of 3 years with no children. 16 of them belonged to the upper socioeconomic status while 46 belonged to the middle socioeconomic status.

**Sampling procedure:**  
Sixty two participants from Bangalore and Chennai ranging between the age group of 22-35 years participated in the study. The intended sample size was sixty. The sample consisted of heterosexual men and women assigned at birth. The sampling methods applied was non-probability convenience sampling method (Edgar & Manz, 2017) and participants were approached by going to residential societies. Informed consent was taken from the participants, followed by which they were given the demographic form, the partner phubbing scale and couples satisfaction scale.

The following are the inclusion criteria:

- Participants should be between the age group of 22-35 years.
- Participants should be married for at least one year.
- Participants should be currently living with their partner.
- Participants should not have children at present.
- ~~• Participants should be fluent in written and spoken English~~
- Participants should be residing in Chennai or Bangalore.

The following are the exclusion criteria:

- Participants who are married but not living with their partners.
- Participants who are undergoing treatment for any physical or mental health illness.

**Materials and Data Collection Measures:**  
The Partner Phubbing Scale developed by Roberts and David in the year 2016 was used to measure the extent to which an individual is experiencing partner phubbing on a day to day basis in their romantic relationships. The scale has a reliability of 0.93 and has been validated and tested (Roberts & David, 2016).. The items are scored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (all the time). Higher the score, higher is the frequency of phubbing behaviour experienced with the partner (Zang et al., 2022). The Couples Satisfaction Scale (CSI-16) is 16-item scale developed by Funk and Rogge in the year 2007. It is used to measure the relationship satisfaction of married, dating and cohabiting couples. It has can internal consistency of 0.98 and is validated and tested. The items are scored on a Likert scale. Total scores are obtained by adding all the scores. It ranges from 0-81. Higher the score, higher the relationship



satisfaction. However, a score below 51.5 indicates notable dissatisfaction (Rogge, 2007).

Research Design:

The research design used in this study is Correlational Research Design as the study aims at studying the relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction.

Hypothesis:

There is no significant relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction among married young adults.

Variables:

- Partner Phubbing
- Relationship Satisfaction

Procedure:

The population of the study are married young adults. They were reached out in residential societies. They were briefed about the objectives of the study to ensure that the participants understand the study. They are also briefed about the inclusion and exclusion criteria to make sure that they are an appropriate fit for the study. Informed consent was then taken from them, post which they are given the demographic form, partner phubbing scale and couples satisfaction scale. Data was collected using the survey method.

Operational Definitions:

- Partner Phubbing - “Partner phubbing is the extent to which your romantic partner or spouse uses or is distracted by his/her cell phone while in your company.” (Roberts & David, 2016)
- Relationship Satisfaction - “Relationship satisfaction to refer to an individual’s overall assessment of their romantic relationship.” (Funk & Rogge, 2007)

Data Analysis:

The data was first entered and coded in Microsoft Excel. Data cleaning was done to ensure that the data was accurate, consistent, and had no errors. No such responses were found. Hence, all sixty two responses were analysed using the SPSS 24 software. Descriptive statistics were used to obtain the mean and standard deviation. Since the data for relationship satisfaction was not normally distributed, Spearman’s Correlation Coefficient was used to analyse the relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction among married young adults. Microsoft Excel was also used for creating bar graphs and pie charts for the participants’ demographics.

Ethics:

The ethical considerations met in the present research are taking informed consent from the participants, debriefing them about confidentiality and research objectives and giving due credit to the authors of the researches that were used in the study. The identity of the participants was also protected by ensuring anonymity.

**Handbook of Research on Deception, Fake News, and ...**

• Participants should be fluent in written and spoken English  
<https://books.google.com/books?id=LJGbDwAAQBAJ>

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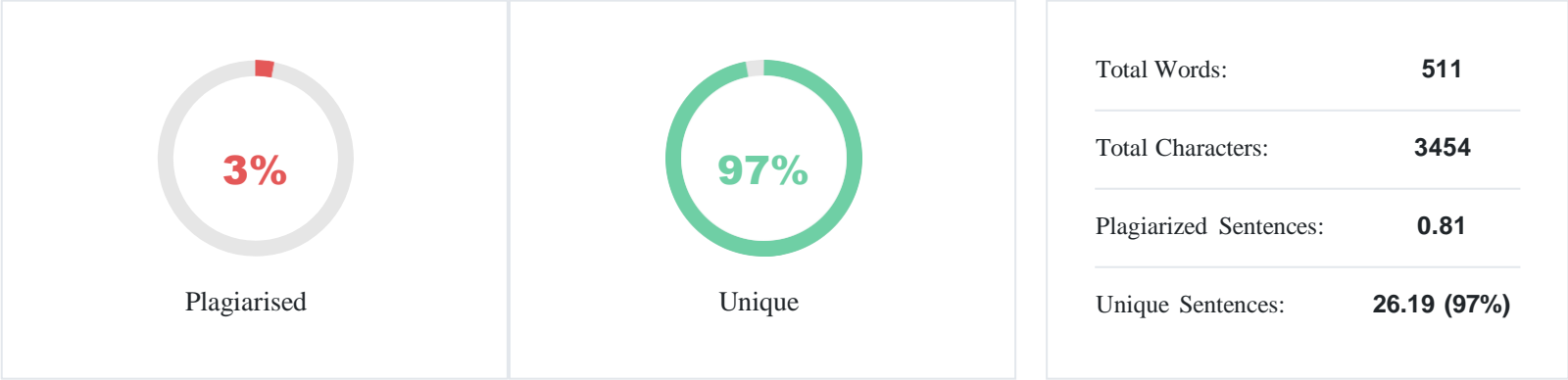
**The Impact of Physical Health, Race, and Financial Status on ...**

• Relationship Satisfaction - “Relationship satisfaction to refer to an individual’s overall assessment of their romantic relationship.” (Funk & Rogge, 2007)  
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0192513X211058830>

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This aim of this research is to study the relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction. This chapter contains the results of the correlational analysis conducted on the data collected to understand this relationship.

Figure 1  
Showing the gender distribution of the sample

Figure 2  
Showing the socioeconomic status of the sample

Figure 3  
Showing the place of residence of the sample

The descriptive statistics show the distribution of the demographic variables in the study population (Table 1). In the study, (N = 62), 26 (41.9%) participants identify as male, and 36 (58.1%) participants identify as female. There were 46 (74.2%) participants who belonged to the middle socioeconomic status and 16 (25.8%) participants who belonged to the upper socioeconomic status. Out of the 62 participants, 38 (61.3%) of them resided in Chennai, while the other 24 (38.7%) resided in Bangalore.

Table 1  
Showing the mean, standard deviation, and range of the study variables

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Range
Partner Phubbing	62	24.84	5.528	22
Relationship Satisfaction	62	68.53	11.437	52

The descriptive statistics show the mean, standard deviation, and range of the study variables in the study population (Table 2). The mean value to Partner Phubbing (N = 62) is 24.84 and the standard deviation is 5.528. This shows that the individual datasets are distributed far away from the mean. The range is 22. The mean value of Relationship Satisfaction (N = 62) is 68.53 and the standard deviation is 11.437. This

again, shows that the individual datasets are distributed far away from the mean. The range is 52.

Table 2  
Showing the normality test of the scale variables using Shapiro-Wilk test  
Hypothesis- The data is normally distributed.

Variable Statistic df Significance

Partner Phubbing 0.976 62 0.257

Relationship Satisfaction 0.868 62 0.000

The significance values for Partner Phubbing and Relationship Satisfaction on Shapiro-Wilk test are 0.257 and 0.000, respectively (Table 3). Since the value of significance of Partner Phubbing is  $> p=0.05$ , the data for it is normally distributed. However, the value of significance of Relationship Satisfaction is  $< p=0.05$ , which indicates that the data for this variable is not normally distributed. Hence, the hypothesis for normality is accepted for partner phubbing but retained for relationship satisfaction.

Figure 4  
Showing scatter plot for correlation

Figure 4 shows the data is showing a downhill pattern and the points are closely clustered, moving from top left to right. This indicates that the variables have a linear relationship.

Table 3  
Spearman's correlation values for the relationships between Partner Phubbing and Relationship Satisfaction  
Variable Spearman's rho Significance

Partner Phubbing and Relationship Satisfaction -0.644\*\* 0.000

\*\* $p>0.01$

Table 4 shows the correlation values of the study variables. The value of -0.644\*\* indicates that there is a negative relationship between Partner Phubbing and Relationship Satisfaction. This means that when Partner Phubbing increases, Relationship Satisfaction decreases, and vice versa. The relationship between the two study variables is statistically significant at 0.01 level. The closer the Spearman's rho to -1, the stronger the negative correlation. A value of -0.644 indicates a strong negative relationship between the two study variables.

**the effect of liquidity on the return on investments for**

This indicates that the variables have a linear relationship.

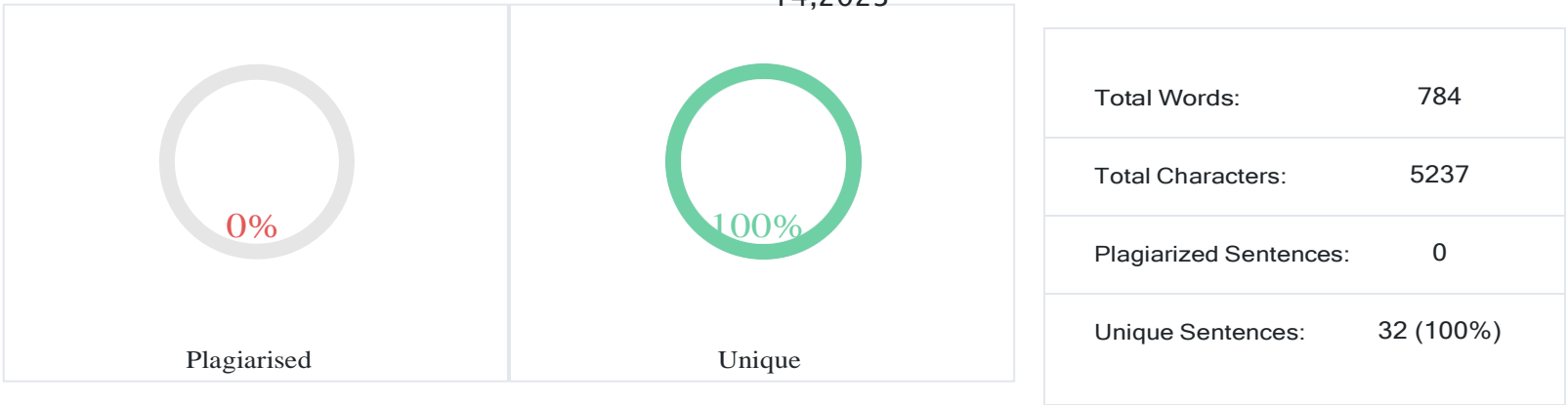
[http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/bitstream/handle/11295/74835/Muraguri\\_The%20Effect%20Of%20Liquidity%20On%20The%20Return%20On%20Investments%20For%20Saccos%20In%20Nairobi.pdf?sequence=4](http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/bitstream/handle/11295/74835/Muraguri_The%20Effect%20Of%20Liquidity%20On%20The%20Return%20On%20Investments%20For%20Saccos%20In%20Nairobi.pdf?sequence=4)

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All of us possess certain habits that bother our romantic partners, and these social allergens could have a significant impact on their relationship satisfaction if not timely attended to. Given the deeply rooted characteristic of smart phones in every aspect of modern-day life and the seriousness of having a harmonious relationship, along with the purpose of applying the current body of knowledge of partner phubbing in India, it is important to study the association between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction. Hence, the current study aimed at studying the relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction among married young adults in the metropolitan cities of Chennai and Bangalore. Data was collected from 62 participants, and the proposed hypothesis was that there is no significant relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction (H0).

Data was entered on Microsoft Excel and cleaned. Bar graphs and pie charts for participants' demographics were created using the same. It was then transferred to SPSS 24, where it was subjected to test for normality. Since the data for relationship satisfaction was not normally distributed, Spearman's rank correlation coefficient was used to study the relationship. The correlation value was  $\rho = -0.644$  at 0.01 significance level. The findings of this study quantitatively show that in the 62 married young adults residing in Chennai and Bangalore, there exists a negative relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction, hence rejecting the null hypothesis (H0).

The results of the study are also supported by previous research studies done in this area, which have shown that partner phubbing adversely affects relationship satisfaction among married young adults (Roberts & David, 2016; Johnson, 2020; Renckon, 2020; Teixeira & Freire, 2020; Beukeboom & Pollmann, 2021; Wang et al., 2021; Chmielik et al., 2022; Thomas et al., 2022; YAM, 2022; Zhan et al., 2022; Togaret al, 2023).

However, there are studies that have shown conflicting results. Cizmeci (2017) has indicated that there is a positive relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction, meaning that an increase in partner phubbing can result in an increase in relationship satisfaction, and vice versa.

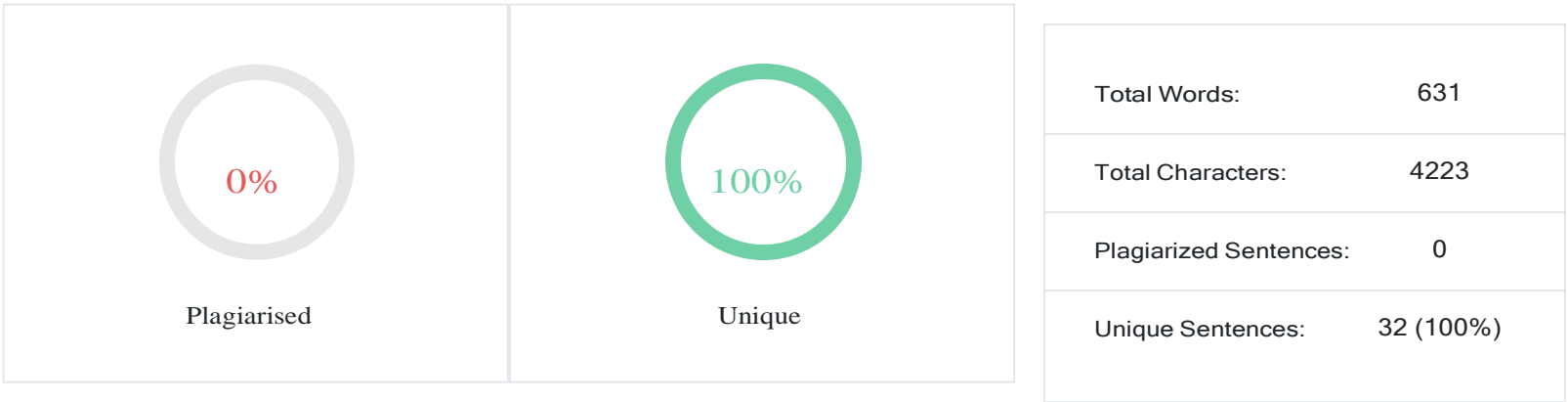
The present study further contributes to the existence of a negative relationship between the study variables, thus confirming the experiences of those who perceive reduced relationship satisfaction on being phubbed by their spouse. Although the present finding is consistent with international studies, and there is a dearth in the studies conducted on these variables in India, the results of this study are contextually pertinent to India, specifically Chennai and Bangalore.

The present results are consistent with the theoretical models of symbolic interactionism theory and displacement hypothesis. According to the displacement theory (Valkenburg and Peter, 2007), people's time spent on smartphones replaces or displaces the quality time they could have spent with their spouses. According to the social interactionism theory, people's relationships with other people are shaped by the meanings they attach to them; these meanings can be handled or changed depending on how the person interprets the interaction (Denzin 1992; Halpern and Katz 2017). It

is indication of dissatisfaction with a relationship when a person's romantic partner uses their smartphone when they are together. Hence, these two theories can be used as strong grounds to say that partner phubbing has a negative effect on relationship satisfaction (Wang et al., 2021), hence reducing their satisfaction with the relationship. The descriptive statistics of the study show that the sample were of the age 24 years and older and majority of them have been married for 2 years. Among the 62 participants, 41.9% were male participants and 58.1% female participants, out of which 61.3% resided in Chennai and the remaining 38.7% resided in Bangalore. It is important to take into consideration that 74.2% of the population

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The present study extends the research on romantic relationships by studying smart phone use. Distracted by smart phone use in the company of a romantic partner, called partner phubbing, is a social allergen. Social allergens are emotion arousing behaviours or situations that are perceived as unpleasant but not aversive. Phubbing by a partner in a romantic relationship may seem minor initially, but may cause major roadblocks in the relationship as it progresses.

Previous research studies have re ected upon the social allergens, such as partner phubbing and its serious implications on married couples than unmarried couples. Furthermore, literature also suggests that young adults have high expectations from their partners, and when they are not ful lled, their satisfaction with the relationship diminishes. Additionally, studies conducted under the domain of partner phubbing have majorly been done in the west, which makes their results less generalisable to the Indian context. Hence, the current study focuses on investigating the association between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction on married young adults.

Using convenience sampling and snowball sampling, participants were approached in residential societies in Chennai and Bangalore. Data was collected from 62 participants between the age 24-35 years using the questionnaire method. It was then analysed using Spearman’s rank correlation coef cient and a strong negative correlation was obtained. In conclusion, the study strongly con rms that an increase in partner phubbing will lead to a decrease in relationship satisfaction, and vice versa.

**Limitations:**

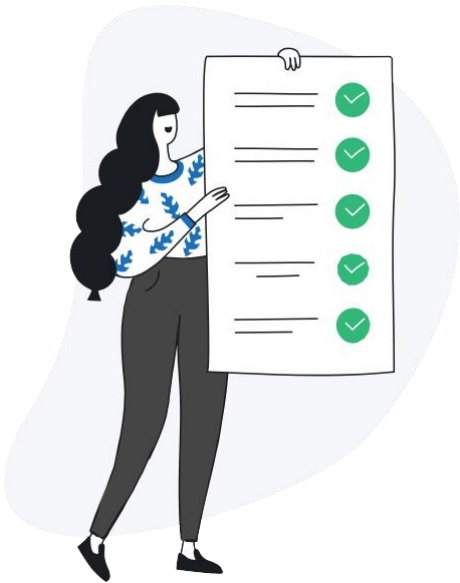
There are some limitations to this study, however. First, since all the questionnaires were self-report measures, it is possible for social desirability bias to creep in. Additionally, it could be a possibility that the dissatisfaction reported by the participant in the measures could be due to reasons other than phubbing. A social desirability tool should be included in the study to address this concern. It could also be that individuals report more phubbing on the days they are angry or dissatis ed with the relationship on a given day (Zhan, et al., 2022). Second, most of the participants were known to the researcher due to convenience sampling. Hence, there could have answered in a socially desirable manner due to their connections with the researcher.

Third, relationship dissatisfaction among adults could have been due to various factors other than partner phubbing (Thomas et al., 2022). The reader are requested to keep this in mind while reading the research paper. Forth, survey method was applied using pen and paper, hence limiting the researcher from collecting data from different parts of the country. Fifth, although the research focused on conducting this research in India, data was collected from limited states, reducing this generalizability. Sixth, the current study has established a negative relationship between the study variables. However, the direction of the relationship was unknown. Finally, there is a lack of homogeneity in the sample with respect to socioeconomic status due to which the results might be biased. Furthermore, most participants were in the ‘romantic stage’ of their marriage, i.e., the initial 2 years. Since partners nd the differences in each other ‘cute and endearing’, they could have a distorted perception of their partner’s phubbing behaviour. This also could have led to the results be biased.

**Recommendations:**

A mixed method study can be adopted. Participants can be asked open ended questions which could help to understand their behavioural and emotional responses to phubbing, along with quantitatively understanding their experience. Future research in this area can focus on recruiting a larger sample from

more cities in India to increase the generalizability of the study. Studies can also focus on understanding the causal relationship between these variables through regression. Since most of the participants were still in the ‘romantic stage’ of their marriage, a cross-sectional study can be done to understand the functioning of the study variables across various stages of marriage.



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