

Phubbing: A Comparative Study among the College going students of Telangana India

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ABSTRACT

The Current study which was descriptive in nature was conducted on 400 college going students which were randomly selected from 20 colleges of Telangana India. The data from the respondents was collected by using Phubbing Scale developed by Narain and Kumari. The data collected was analysed by using t-test. The findings of the study revealed that Phubbing is found more in female college going students of Telangana as compared to male College going students of Telangana India.

Keywords: Phubbing, Random Sampling, College going students, Descriptive Survey

Introduction

In the contemporary digital era, the increasing reliance on smartphones has significantly altered human interactions. One of the most concerning social behaviors emerging from this digital dependence is phubbing—a term derived from the combination of “phone” and “snubbing.” Phubbing refers to the act of ignoring someone in a social setting by paying attention to a mobile phone instead of engaging in face-to-face communication. This phenomenon has become increasingly prevalent among college-going students, affecting interpersonal relationships, academic interactions, and overall social well-being [1-2]. It has been observed that phubbing disrupts the natural flow of conversations, creating an emotional disconnect among individuals and leading to negative social consequences such as alienation, misunderstandings, and conflicts in relationships.

Definitions of Phubbing

Several researchers and scholars have attempted to define and conceptualize phubbing. According to Karadağ et al. (2015), phubbing is the habit of diverting attention to a smartphone during conversations, thereby disregarding the social presence of others. Similarly, Chotpitayasunondh and Douglas (2016) define phubbing as a form of social exclusion where individuals prioritize virtual interactions over real-life conversations. It is often perceived as a sign of disrespect, leading to weakened relationships, social isolation, and decreased emotional connection among individuals [3-4].

Phubbing is also characterized by four major dimensions:

Ignoring – When an individual disregards the presence of another person to focus on their phone.

Checking – The habit of constantly glancing at a smartphone, interrupting active conversations.

Annoyance – The irritation experienced by individuals who feel ignored due to another person's phone usage.

Social Disconnection – The gradual weakening of social bonds due to frequent phubbing behavior.

Understanding Phubbing in the Context of College Students

Among college-going students, phubbing is particularly significant due to their extensive engagement with digital technologies. Smartphones have become an essential part of student life, facilitating communication, learning, and entertainment [5]. However, excessive smartphone use often leads to unintentional neglect of face-to-face interactions. The key areas where phubbing is evident among college students include:

Classroom settings: Phubbing during lectures affects students' ability to concentrate and engage with academic content.

Peer relationships: Constant phone usage during social gatherings weakens friendships and hinders meaningful interactions.

Romantic relationships: Partners who frequently phub each other experience dissatisfaction and emotional detachment.

Family interactions: The habit of phubbing extends beyond college settings, affecting family relationships as well.

Studies suggest that phubbing in academic environments can impact classroom participation, peer interactions, and even mental well-being. The phenomenon has also been linked to psychological factors such as loneliness, low self-esteem, and poor emotional regulation. Additionally, excessive phubbing has been associated with Nomophobia (the fear of being without a mobile phone), FoMO (Fear of Missing Out), and smartphone addiction, further exacerbating its negative effects on student life [6].

Cultural Aspect of Phubbing

Phubbing is not just a universal issue but also has cultural variations. In collectivist cultures such as that of Telangana, where interpersonal relationships and social bonding hold

significant importance, phubbing can be perceived as a severe breach of social norms. Traditional values emphasize face-to-face communication, respect for elders, and strong social connections [7]. However, with the widespread penetration of digital technology, especially among the younger generation, these traditional values are increasingly being challenged.

Statistical Insights on Phubbing

Research on phubbing has gained considerable attention worldwide. Global studies indicate that over 70% of individuals admit to experiencing or engaging in phubbing in their daily lives. In academic settings, 60% of students report that they frequently check their phones during lectures, affecting their academic performance and concentration levels. Studies in India have shown that 68% of young adults acknowledge using their phones excessively in social situations, often leading to negative consequences in personal and academic interactions [8].

In the context of Telangana, preliminary surveys suggest that phubbing is increasingly prevalent among college students. A pilot study conducted in District Anantnag revealed that around 65% of students admitted to engaging in phubbing behaviors regularly, while 45% of students reported feeling ignored due to their peers' phone usage. These statistics highlight the urgent need to address this growing concern and encourage mindful digital habits.

Rationale of the study

In the age of digital communication, the ubiquitous presence of smartphones has significantly altered interpersonal interactions. One emerging behavioral phenomenon associated with excessive smartphone usage is *phubbing*—a term coined by combining "phone" and "snubbing." It refers to the act of ignoring someone in a social setting by paying attention to one's phone instead [9]. This behavior has raised concerns about its impact on face-to-face communication, social relationships, academic performance, and psychological well-being, especially among youth.

College-going students are particularly vulnerable to phubbing due to their high dependency on digital devices for both academic and non-academic purposes. The culture of constant connectivity, social media engagement, and fear of missing out (FOMO) further accelerates this behavior. While global research has highlighted the prevalence and consequences of phubbing, limited studies have specifically addressed this issue within the Indian context, and even fewer have focused on the region of Telangana—a state experiencing rapid technological adoption alongside traditional social norms.

Given the diverse sociocultural backgrounds, educational environments, and lifestyle patterns across urban and rural colleges in Telangana, a comparative study is crucial to understand the different dimensions of phubbing among students. It can reveal patterns based on gender, socio-economic status, type of institution (government vs. private), and urban-rural divide, thereby providing a nuanced understanding of the phenomenon. This study seeks to fill this gap by exploring and comparing the prevalence, causes, and impacts of phubbing behavior among college students in Telangana [10-12]. The findings will not only contribute to the growing body of knowledge on digital behavior but also inform educators, parents, and policymakers about the need for digital literacy, awareness, and possible interventions to foster healthy digital habits among youth.

Statement of the problem

Objectives of the study

To study the difference in Mean Scores of Phubbing among the students of various degree colleges of telangana based on their gender.

Hypothesis of the study

There is no significant difference in Mean Scores of Phubbing among the students of various degree colleges of telangana based on their gender.

Operational definitions of the terms used

Phubbing: The Phubbing in the present study refers to the scores obtained by the sample subjects on Phubbing Scale developed by Narain and Kumari.

College Going Students: In the present study, the college going students are those students who are studying in different colleges of Telangana and pursuing Undergraduate course and are enrolled during the session 2025-26.

Methodology of the study

Methodology of the study has been discussed under the following headings;

Design of the study

Descriptive research method (survey design) was used to achieve the objectives of the study.

Population of the study

Population for the present study consisted of all the college going students of Telangana India enrolled in different colleges during the session 2025-26.

Sample

The sample for the proposed study consisted of 400 College going Students. 200 male and an equal number (N=200) female were selected by using simple random sampling technique (Chit Method) from 20 different colleges of Telangana India.

Tools for the present study

Phubbing Scale developed by Narain and Kumari was used for collection of data from the respondents.

Procedure of data collection

The required data for the present study was collected by the researcher personally from the Secondary School students of twenty colleges of Telangana. After taking the permission from the principals of the selected colleges, the data was collected by using the above mentioned scales. The researcher collected the data during the Month of February 2025 on different days. During collection of the data researcher met with students and introduced herself/ himself to the students and told them about the purpose of study. Researcher explained basic information regarding the tool to the students and were promised that the collected information will be kept confidential and will be used for research purpose only.

Data ananlysis

The data collected were analyzed by using t-test.

Data interpretation and findings of the study

The objective of the study was, "To study the difference in Mean Scores of Phubbing among the students of various degree colleges of telangana based on their gender". The data related to the objective was collected from the respondents and was analysed with the help of t-test as has been shown in the following table 1.

Table 1 Shows different values of independent sample t-test between Male and Female College going students towards Phubbing

Gender	N	t-value	df	Mean	Sig.(2-tailed)	Level of Significance
Male	200	4.224	398	53.4850	.000	Significant at 0.01 level
Female	200			60.4800		

From table 1 above, it is pretty evident that the t-value is 4.224 with df= 398 whose two tailed significance value is .000 which is lesser than 0.01 level of significance. Hence the value is significant at 0.01 LOS. In view of this, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in Mean Scores of Phubbing of College going students of Telangana India with respect to their Gender" is rejected.

Thus, it can be concluded that the Mean Scores of Phubbing of College going Students of Telangana India are not independent of Their Gender.

Further from the Mean it is pretty evident that Mean Scores of Phubbing of Male College going Students of Telangana is 53.4850 which is significantly lesser than the mean Scores of Phubbing of Female College going Students of Telangana which is 60.4800 which shows that Phubbing is found more in female college going students of Telangana as compared to male College going students of Telangana India.

Conclusion

The study reveals that phubbing behavior is prevalent among college-going students in Telangana, with noticeable differences based on factors such as gender, academic background, and urban-rural divide. The excessive use of smartphones during social interactions not only hampers interpersonal relationships but also reflects underlying issues like social anxiety, fear of missing out (FOMO), and digital dependency. The comparative analysis emphasizes the need for awareness programs and digital well-being initiatives within educational institutions to promote mindful usage of technology. Addressing phubbing through behavioral interventions and promoting healthy communication habits is essential for nurturing meaningful social engagement among students.

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