

The Effect of Phubbing Behavior on The Interpersonal Communication Among Guidance and Counseling Students at Jambi University

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Abstract: The rapid advancement of information technology has led to intensive gadget usage among university students, giving rise to phubbing behavior, which is the tendency to prioritize attention to gadgets over interpersonal interactions. This study aims to describe the levels of phubbing and interpersonal communication, as well as to examine the impact of phubbing on interpersonal communication among students in the Guidance and Counseling Study Program at Jambi University. A quantitative ex post facto design was employed, involving 88 students randomly selected from a population of 438 using simple random sampling. Data were collected through a validated and reliable Likert-scale questionnaire and analyzed using regression analysis. The results indicate that phubbing significantly affects interpersonal communication, with an R^2 of 63%, classified as a “strong” influence. These findings highlight the importance of managing gadget use to enhance students’ empathy, social awareness, and face-to-face interactions. Future research is recommended to explore these variables using qualitative or mixed-method approaches to obtain more comprehensive insights.

Keywords: Phubbing, Interpersonal Communication, University Students

INTRODUCTION

Humans are inherently social beings, as they cannot escape the influence of others in daily life. In addition, humans possess a natural need to interact and a social necessity to live and cooperate within groups. Social interaction refers to the dynamic relationships between individuals and groups of people (Sudaryanto, 2010). Such interactions form the foundation of interpersonal communication, through which individuals exchange information, ideas, responses, and emotions. Interpersonal communication occurs in various contexts, ranging

from casual conversations among close friends to professional or public information exchanges.

The significance of interpersonal communication lies in its ability to help individuals build healthy and productive relationships in both personal and professional environments. Effective communication requires skills such as active listening, clear self-expression, emotional understanding, and appropriate response to others' emotions (Maulani et al., 2024). One common issue affecting interpersonal communication is the impact of technological advancements. Technology can reduce emotional engagement and diminish the nuances of non-verbal communication (Arda & Wijayani, 2023).

With the widespread use of social media, texting, and online communication platforms, human interactions tend to become superficial and less expressive. This can result in difficulties understanding the true emotions and intentions of messages. Moreover, technology addiction can disrupt quality time with close individuals, reducing the ability to be fully present and emotionally connected during face-to-face interactions (Heryanto, 2018).

Advancements in communication and information technology have transformed human life, providing both benefits such as easier access to information and communication and drawbacks, including social dependency (Kusuma & Ixfina, 2023). One notable negative consequence of the modern, technology-dominated era is excessive reliance on social media. According to data from the Directorate of International Information Services, Ministry of Communication and Informatics, Facebook and X are among the most popular social networking sites in Indonesia, with the country ranking fourth globally in Facebook usage, after the United States, Brazil, and India. Meanwhile, a survey by Jakpat reported that YouTube was the most accessed social media platform in Indonesia during the first six months of 2021, with 82% of respondents using it, followed by Facebook and Instagram at 77% each.

Social media platforms provide users with opportunities to share content, interact, and consume information. Applications such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, X, Line, and others are widely favored, especially among adolescents. These platforms also allow users to form communities, follow current news, promote businesses, and express themselves through text, images, videos, and live streams (Maulana, 2024). Adolescents use social media to interact, express identity, and strengthen interpersonal bonds. Social media is part of globalization that influences how individuals communicate (Anjana & Hakim, 2024). Users are advised to choose platforms wisely to minimize negative effects while maximizing positive

benefits, such as using platforms with strong privacy features to protect personal information and reduce cyberbullying risks.

A survey conducted by Saggaf with 385 participants in Australia revealed that 62% admitted to diverting attention to electronic devices during face-to-face interactions. The study also highlighted specific situations that increase device usage, including public transportation, coffee breaks, lunchtime, resting in bed, private vehicle travel, and socializing with friends. However, device use was less frequent during meetings, family meals, or formal classes. Saggaf summarized common triggers for excessive device engagement: 1) being on public transport; 2) during lunch or coffee breaks; 3) traveling in a private vehicle; 4) lying in bed; 5) shopping; 6) during learning activities; 7) attending meetings; and 8) socializing with friends (Al-Saggaf, 2022).

From these observations, the term phubbing was introduced by Karadağ in 2015. Phubbing is defined as the act of ignoring others in one's environment in favor of interacting with electronic devices (Karadağ et al., 2015). Identifies three characteristics of phubbing: first, reduced engagement during direct social interactions; second, persistent focus on devices regardless of conversation content; and third, disruptive or potentially harmful behaviors toward others while using devices in public (Hamdiyah, 2021). Clearly, social contact and phubbing are closely related, as individuals engrossed in devices often neglect their immediate surroundings.

Interviews with Guidance and Counseling students at the University of Jambi revealed that nearly all students frequently engage in phubbing, both inside and outside classrooms, such as checking notifications or browsing social media. Informants reported prioritizing personal device use over interaction with others, influenced by factors such as boredom, academic workload, and other situational elements.

The phubbing phenomenon can be attributed to three main factors: 1) Media Dependence, greater reliance on media increases its influence on behavior, leading to difficulty disengaging even during social interaction; 2) Behavioral Adaptation, human behavior adjusts in response to environmental changes, promoting increased device use during communication; and 3) Social-Psychological Influences, cultural and normative factors encourage continuous device engagement, including during interpersonal interactions.

Phubbing, characterized by ignoring those around while engaging with devices, significantly impacts interpersonal communication. As technology and social media use expand, phubbing has become a major barrier to building healthy interpersonal relationships (Putri & Afdal, 2024). This behavior reduces attention, empathy, and emotional presence in

direct communication, leading to relationships that are less intimate, less understanding, and less meaningful.

Based on these considerations, phubbing is recognized as a major barrier to effective interpersonal communication, leading to reduced attention, empathy, and emotional engagement in face-to-face interactions, and consequently diminishing the quality and harmony of interpersonal relationships. Therefore, this study aims to: 1) describe the level of phubbing behavior among Guidance and Counseling students at the University of Jambi; 2) describe the level of interpersonal communication; and 3) examine the effect of phubbing behavior on students' interpersonal communication. This research is expected to contribute to a deeper understanding of phubbing behavior and its implications for managing interpersonal communication among university students.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative approach to examine the effect of phubbing behavior on interpersonal communication. The approach emphasizes the collection of measurable data in statistical form, allowing for accurate interpretation and clear visualization of the results. A sample was selected randomly, and data were gathered using research instruments designed to test the study hypotheses. The research was carefully structured to maintain focus on the relationship between phubbing and interpersonal communication. The study utilized an Ex-Post Facto design, observing the outcomes of actions that have already occurred rather than being directly manipulated by the researcher.

The population consisted of all students of the Guidance and Counseling Study Program at the University of Jambi from the 2021 to 2024 cohorts, totaling 438 students. A sample is a subset of the population representing its characteristics. In this study, 88 students were selected using Simple Random Sampling to ensure representativeness. The sample size was determined proportionally based on interpolation formulas, reflecting the distribution across cohorts. Data were collected randomly from the selected participants without the need for additional calculations, ensuring an unbiased representation of the population.

Data collection was conducted using a questionnaire as the primary instrument, with a Likert scale employed to measure respondents' perceptions and behaviors. Prior to administration, the questionnaire was tested for validity and reliability using SPSS version 26 to ensure its accuracy and consistency. The validated instrument allowed for systematic measurement of the research variables, providing reliable data for subsequent statistical analysis.

RESULTS

Phubbing Behaviour

Phubbing behaviour serves as the independent variable (X) in this study. A questionnaire measuring phubbing behaviour, consisting of 29 items, was distributed to 88 respondents. After the respondents completed the questionnaire and the responses were scored using a Likert scale, the data were compiled for analysis. Based on the questionnaire results collected from students of the Guidance and Counselling Study Program at Jambi University, cohorts 2021–2024 (N = 88), the total score obtained was 4,929, with individual scores ranging from 40 to 72. The mean score was calculated at 56. According to the percentage analysis conducted, the overall phubbing behaviour of the students was 48%, indicating that, on average, their phubbing behaviour falls into the “moderate” category.

Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication served as the dependent variable (Y) in this study. A questionnaire assessing interpersonal communication, consisting of 22 items, was distributed to 88 respondents. After the respondents completed the questionnaire, the data were scored using a Likert scale. The analysis of the responses from Guidance and Counseling students at the University of Jambi, cohort 2021–2024, revealed a total score of 3,362, with the highest individual score being 58 and the lowest 17. The mean score was 38.2. Based on the percentage calculations, the overall level of interpersonal communication among the students reached 43%, indicating that their interpersonal communication can be classified as “moderate”.

Statistical Test

The normality test was conducted to determine whether the data were normally distributed. This analysis was performed using the One-Sample Kolmogorov–Smirnov (K–S) Test, processed with the assistance of SPSS version 26 software.

Table 1. Normality Test Results

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		
	Phubbing Behavior	Interpersonal Communication
N	88	88
Test Statistic	0.057	0.091

Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.200 ^{c,d}	.069 ^c
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Based on the results presented in the table above, the normality test conducted using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov method with the assistance of SPSS version 26 indicated that the Asymp. Sig (2-tailed) value for the phubbing behavior variable was 0.200 and for the interpersonal communication variable was 0.069, both exceeding the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that the data are normally distributed.

The linearity test aims to determine whether there is a consistent directional relationship between the independent and dependent variables. This test was conducted using SPSS version 26, with the decision based on the ANOVA table, particularly by examining the asymptotic significance value.

Table 2. Linearity Test Results

ANOVA Table				
			F	Sig.
Interpersonal Communication *	Between Groups	(Combined)	5.340	0.000
		Linearity	134.579	0.000
		Deviation from Linearity	0.725	0.823

Based on the ANOVA linearity test output, the calculated F value for “Deviation from Linearity” was 0.725 with a significance value of 0.823, which is greater than 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that the variable phubbing behavior (X) and the variable interpersonal communication (Y) have a statistically significant and linear relationship.

Table 3. Simple Regression Analysis Results

ANOVA		
Model	F	Sig.
Regression	147.828	.000 ^b

Table 4. Coefficients of Simple Regression Analysis

Coefficients				
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error		
(Constant)	91.255	4.401	20.733	0.000
Phubbing Behavior	-0.947	0.078	-12.158	0.000

Based on the results of the simple linear regression analysis, the significance value was 0.00 (< 0.05), indicating that phubbing behavior has a significant effect on interpersonal communication. The regression coefficients show a constant (a) of 91.255 and a regression coefficient (b) of -0.947 , forming the regression equation $\hat{Y} = 91.255 - 0.947X$. The negative coefficient indicates an inverse relationship between phubbing behavior and interpersonal communication, meaning that for every one-unit increase in phubbing behavior, interpersonal communication decreases by 0.947 units. Thus, higher levels of phubbing behavior are associated with lower levels of interpersonal communication. When phubbing behavior is zero, the predicted value of interpersonal communication is 91.255.

Table 5. T-Test Results

Paired Samples Test				
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	Interpersonal Communication – Phubbing Behavior	-10.785	87	0.000

Based on the table above, the analysis indicates the influence of phubbing behavior on interpersonal communication. The calculated t-value is -10.785 , with a significance level of $\text{Sig (2-tailed)} = 0.00$, which is less than 0.05. This result leads to the rejection of the null

hypothesis (H₀) and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (H_a). It can therefore be concluded that phubbing behavior has a significant effect on interpersonal communication.

Table 6. Determination Index Measurement Results

Model Summary	
R	R Square
.795 ^a	0.632

Based on the table above, the obtained R Square value is 0.632, indicating a coefficient of determination of 63%. This means that the phubbing behavior variable contributes 63% to the variation in interpersonal communication, while the remaining 37% is influenced by other factors not examined in this study. According to Table 3.7, this value falls within the “Strong” interpretation range of 0.50 to 0.81. Therefore, the results of this study suggest that there is a negative and strong influence between phubbing behavior (X) and interpersonal communication (Y).

DISCUSSION

Phubbing, a term formed from the combination of phone and snubbing, refers to the act of ignoring people nearby due to excessive attention to one’s mobile device (Al-Saggaf, 2022). This behavior has emerged alongside rapid technological advancement and the widespread use of smartphones and social media. It frequently occurs in various social situations such as gatherings, friendly conversations, and even within family or professional environments (Saloom & Veriantari, 2022). Individuals who engage in this behavior, known as phubbers, tend to prioritize their digital interactions over in-person communication, which disrupts social engagement and weakens interpersonal bonds. The consequences of phubbing are substantial for both the phubber and the phubbee (the person being ignored). Phubbers often experience reduced emotional connection and social detachment, while phubbees tend to feel neglected, unappreciated, and may suffer from lower self-esteem and increased anxiety (Aulia et al., 2024). Findings from a study conducted among Guidance and Counseling students at Jambi University showed that 48% of students exhibited phubbing behavior, placing it in the “moderate” category. This suggests that many students still struggle with maintaining balanced interactions, underscoring the need for deeper understanding of phubbing’s detrimental effects on interpersonal relationships.

Interpersonal communication refers to the exchange of information, thoughts, and emotions between two or more individuals through both verbal and non-verbal channels (Ngalimun, 2022). This process involves not only message delivery but also comprehension of meaning and emotional nuances. Core competencies such as active listening, clear self-expression, and empathy are vital for fostering constructive and meaningful relationships (Febrianty et al., 2023). Within the field of Guidance and Counseling, these communication skills are particularly essential for developing trust and empathy in counselor–client interactions. The research results revealed that interpersonal communication among students scored 43%, also categorized as “moderate.” This indicates that although students possess a fair level of communicative ability, continuous improvement is required to enhance their interpersonal effectiveness across academic, social, and professional contexts (Zuhriyah et al., 2024).

Further statistical analysis demonstrated that phubbing behavior significantly affects interpersonal communication. When individuals engage in phubbing, they tend to overlook key aspects of communication, such as facial expressions and tone of voice, leading to misunderstandings, interpersonal tension, and feelings of neglect (Kurniawan et al., 2025). Based on the SPSS version 26 analysis, the significance value obtained was 0.00 (< 0.05), indicating a statistically significant relationship between phubbing behavior and interpersonal communication. The R Square value of 0.632, or 63%, signifies a “strong” level of influence, while the remaining 37% is attributed to other variables not included in this study. These results highlight that higher levels of phubbing correspond with decreased quality of interpersonal communication, as this behavior impedes empathy, limits emotional engagement, and undermines the formation of positive social relationships among students.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study conducted among students of the Guidance and Counseling Study Program at Jambi University, the conclusions of this research are as follows:

1. The analysis results indicate that the level of phubbing behavior among Guidance and Counseling students at Jambi University reached 48%. This percentage places the phubbing behavior of the students within the “moderate” category.
2. The analysis results also show that the level of interpersonal communication among Guidance and Counseling students at Jambi University reached 43%, which is likewise categorized as “moderate.”
3. Based on the results of a simple linear regression analysis performed using SPSS version 26, the obtained significance value was 0.00, which is lower than 0.05. This finding indicates

that the independent variable, phubbing behavior (X), has a significant influence on the dependent variable, interpersonal communication (Y). The magnitude of this effect is represented by the R Square value of 0.632, which equals 63% when converted to a percentage, and is categorized as a “strong” influence. The regression equation derived from the analysis is $\hat{Y} = 91.255 + (-0.947)X$. This equation suggests a negative relationship, meaning that for every one-unit increase in phubbing behavior (X), the value of interpersonal communication (Y) decreases by 0.947. When the phubbing behavior variable (X) is at zero, the predicted value of interpersonal communication (Y) is 91.255.

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