

## Conference Paper

# The Relationship Between Phubbing and Romantic Relationship Satisfaction: A Literature Review

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## Abstract

This study examined the relationship between phubbing and romantic relationship satisfaction in dating couples. Research on the topic of discussing the relationship between phubbing and romantic relationship satisfaction is rarely conducted in Indonesia. Research carried out abroad focuses on the satisfaction of romantic relationships in marriage couples, not dating couples. Therefore, a research that discusses phubbing and romantic relationship satisfaction in dating couples is needed. Two variables are still considered new in the world of psychology. This study aims to determine the relationship between phubbing and romantic relationship satisfaction in dating couples. The method used in this study is a literature review in which presented various studies. In this research, presented several studies related to related aspects, namely phubbing and satisfaction romantic relationship. It was concluded that there was a relationship between phubbing and romantic relationship satisfaction among dating couples. In addition, we presented several studies related to the topic and related variables within the aspects. Further research is needed in order to know what variables are influenced and influenced.

**Keywords:** phubbing, romantic relationship, relationship satisfaction

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## 1. Introduction

Romantic relationships are ongoing voluntary interactions and mutual recognition, which are different from friendly relationships and are characterized by certain intensities such as expressions of affection and sexual erotic (Collins, Welsh, & Furman, 2009). In several studies, it is known that success in establishing and maintaining positive romantic relationships carried out by young adults tends to make them more satisfied with their lives (Adamczyk, 2017). and can adapt better to the next phase of life (Roisman, Masten, Coatsworth, & Tellegen, 2004). Meanwhile, the satisfaction of a romantic relationship can be defined as an interpersonal evaluation of feelings towards their partner and their

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subjective relationship (Cepukiene, 2019; Cizmeci; 2017). (Collins et al., 2009) define satisfaction in a romantic relationship as the level of intimacy, affection and mutual support shown by partners to each other. (Ward, Lundberg, Zabriskie, & Berrett, 2009) defined romantic relationship satisfaction as an emotional state in which individuals are satisfied with their interactions in their relationship and their experiences and expectations about their romantic relationship. The satisfaction of romantic relationships is positively related to life satisfaction, where life satisfaction has a negative effect, namely the emergence of depression (Roberts & David, 2016). Research conducted by (Adamczyk, 2017) also found that feeling satisfied with relationship status predicts high life satisfaction, but is less related to emotional and psychological well-being.

Research conducted by (Murray, 1999) states that an important factor in a positive and long-lasting romantic relationship is a feeling of caring for one another, being responsive to the needs of a partner in any situation. Good communication is also one of the crucial things in maintaining the satisfaction of romantic relationships (Cizmeci; 2017; Eğeci & Gençöz, 2006). Satisfaction in a romantic relationship can be achieved when couples fulfill each other's needs and desires (Peleg, 2008). In addition, the satisfaction of a romantic relationship is also influenced by the feeling of being connected with a partner, which must be open and focused on one another without being distracted by other things (Rossouw & Leggett, 2014). According to (Kansky, 2018) there are three components that affect the satisfaction of romantic relationships, namely intimacy, passion and commitment. Meanwhile, according to (Cepukiene, 2019) there are important components that affect the satisfaction of romantic relationships, namely behavior during conflict, emotional & sexual intimacy, attachment, mutual trust and meeting each other's needs, sharing interests and activities and having mutually beneficial goals. Other research by (Hunter, 2009; Visvanathan, 2009) states that communication and negotiation strategies can be effective facilities in developing problem solving in a romantic relationship and reduce the risk of conflict that can lead to violence or withdraw from a romantic relationship. According to (Wang, Xie, Wang, Wang, & Lei, 2017). The high level of conflict in a relationship can lead to low satisfaction in romantic relationships and can indirectly lead to dating violence (DV) ((Hunter, 2009; Visvanathan, 2009; Wang et al., 2017). Based on CATAHU data (Annual Notes) National Commission on Violence against Women in 2019 (Komnas Perempuan, 2020) there were 1,815 cases of dating violence (DV) throughout 2019 in Indonesia.

A qualitative preliminary study conducted by researchers on 7 students aged 19-22 years who have dating romantic relationships with a relationship duration ranging from 1-6 years found that all respondents' partners had neglected their partners when

they were communicating directly by operating the telephone. handheld. According to respondents, their partners do this with a percentage of 30-50%, which means they often ignore their partners when communicating directly by operating their cell phones. This behavior causes various kinds of responses, such as feelings of annoyance, neglect, and loneliness that are felt by respondents. In fact, 4 out of 7 respondents end up doing the same thing to their partner. According to the respondent's opinion, the results of the satisfaction of their romantic relationship due to their neglect of their partner because of operating a cell phone are around 60-70%. Respondents stated that this behavior greatly interferes with communication in a relationship, because the partner becomes unfocused with what the other person is talking about because of interference from cell phones. This disturbed communication causes misunderstanding, conflict to jealousy which affects the satisfaction of their romantic relationship.

Neglectful behavior when around a partner who is in an intimate or romantic relationship is called partner phubbing (pphubbing) (Cizmeci; 2017; Roberts & David, 2016). Phubbing is becoming a phenomenon that is becoming increasingly prevalent due to the use of cell phones (Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas, 2018a). Phubbing is an abbreviation of the word "phone" and "snubbing" (Roberts & David, 2016). According to (Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas, 2018b) phubbing can be interpreted as an action carried out by a person without ignoring other people when interacting directly caused by the use of a cell phone. "Phubb" can interrupt conversations when someone is focused on their cell phone or using their cell phone instead of communicating when around other people (Roberts & David, 2016). Based on research conducted by (David & Roberts, 2017) it is proven that when someone is a victim of phubbing, they will use their cell phone more often. Most of them feel neglected by their social environment, so they decide to switch to social media to feel more included by their social environment (Roberts & David, 2016). Other studies have found that there are other causes of phubbing behavior such as smartphone addiction, internet addiction, Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), and self-control (Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas, 2016, 2018b). In addition, research conducted by (Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas, 2018a), found that phubbing affects a person's fundamental needs, including feelings of attachment, the need to be perceived and self-esteem. Phubbing behavior, which is increasingly considered normal in social interactions, has direct and long-term negative effects, such as poor quality of communication and weak interpersonal connections (Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas, 2018b; Vanden Abeele, Antheunis, & Schouten, 2016). Other research on pphubbing has found that pphubbing affects both lower satisfaction in romantic relationships (Halpern & Katz, 2017; McDaniel & Coyne, 2016; Miller-Ott, Kelly, & Duran, 2012; Roberts &

David, 2016; Wang et al., 2017) and low life satisfaction (McDaniel & Coyne, 2016). This happens because the individual feels that his partner is not physically present which risks disrupting basic human needs, namely control and attachment (Roberts & David, 2016). Another study conducted by (Krasnova, Abramova, Notter, & Baumann, 2016) also showed that pphubbing behavior increases feelings of jealousy, neglect and feelings of threat due to poor partner interactions which are associated with satisfying romantic relationships. (Halpern & Katz, 2017) stated that pphubbing also reduces the level of intimacy in romantic relationships. In addition, pphubbing also causes symptoms of depression (McDaniel & Coyne, 2016) and pphubbing is positively related to depression (Wang et al., 2017). Pphubbing has also been shown to have a negative impact on the quality of relationships, in which there is relationship satisfaction (Halpern & Katz, 2017; Roberts & David, 2016; Wang et al., 2017) which is the result of conflicts related to mobile phones (Halpern & Katz, 2017; Roberts & David, 2016). Pphubbing can reduce meaningful interactions with partners in a relationship, where it triggers lower satisfaction in romantic relationships (Roberts & David, 2016).

Research on a similar topic is rarely conducted in Indonesia. Research on the topic of discussing these two variables has been widely carried out abroad, such as in Turkey, USA, China and other countries, where these countries have cultural differences with Indonesia, such as dating styles. In addition, research carried out abroad focuses on the satisfaction of romantic relationships by marriage couples, for example research conducted by (Wang et al., 2017) involving marriage couples aged 26-35 years in China. Meanwhile, the subjects in this study are dating couples with an age range of 19-24 years. The two subjects have different characteristics, a marriage couple has a higher level of relationship commitment than a dating couple (Kansky, 2018). Commitment is one component of mature love (Santrock, 2012). In addition, based on the CATAHU 2020 data previously described, it is known that DV in Indonesia tends to be high. Several studies have found that DV is a strong predictor of the emergence of suicidal thought (Unlu & Cakaloz, 2016) and other negative behaviors such as depression, panic attacks, eating problems, and suicidal thought (Romito, Beltramini, & Escribà-Agüir, 2013). Therefore, a research that discusses phubbing and romantic relationship satisfaction in dating couples are needed.

## 2. Method

Article is written with the approach of the study of literature (literature review) which consists of introduction, methods, discussion and conclusions (Kysh, 2013). The study of

literature is a kind of articles science that is written to make conclusions and evaluations on specific topics (Kysh, 2013). In the review of the phenomenon of phubbing and romantic relationship satisfaction, we use a variety of literature that is relevant, well it is in the form of books, review articles, as well as articles of research. The reason the use of various sources of literature because the lack of empirical research on phubbing and romantic relationship satisfaction.

### 3. Discussion

Little research related to pphubbing and relationship satisfaction is done because it is a new variable created in 2016 by Roberts and David. Based on research conducted by (McDaniel & Coyne, 2016; Roberts & David, 2016) found that pphubbing damaged romantic relationships caused by conflict, decreased relationship satisfaction and a person's well-being. In addition, research conducted by (Miller-Ott et al., 2012), stated that mobile phones are directly related to the level of satisfaction of a person's romantic relationship, where mobile phone users in romantic relationships can increase the emergence of high expectations of partners and conflicts such as feelings of being restricted in freedom and controlled by a partner. Another study conducted by (Krasnova et al., 2016) also shows that pphubbing behavior in romantic relationships is associated with increased feelings of jealousy, which is related to satisfaction in romantic relationships.

#### 3.1. Satisfaction of Romantic Relationships

##### 3.1.1. Definition of Romantic Relationships

Romantic relationships are ongoing voluntary interactions and mutual recognition, which are different from friendly relationships and are characterized by certain intensities such as expressions of affection and erotic sexuality (Collins et al., 2009). Romantic relationships are cited as an important factor in emotional well-being in young adulthood (Simon & Barrett, 2010). In several studies, it is known that success in establishing and maintaining positive romantic relationships carried out by young adults tends to be more satisfied with their lives (Adamczyk & Segrin, 2016) and can adapt better to the next phase of life (Roisman et al., 2004).

### 3.1.2. Definition of Satisfaction of Romantic Relationships

Romantic relationship satisfaction is an interpersonal evaluation of feelings towards their partner and their subjective relationship (Cepukiene, 2019; Cizmeci, 2017). Collins et al. (2009) define satisfaction in a romantic relationship as the level of intimacy, affection and mutual support shown by partners to each other. Meanwhile, (Ward et al., 2009) define romantic relationship satisfaction as an emotional state in which individuals are satisfied with their interactions in their relationship and their experiences and expectations about their romantic relationship.

### 3.1.3. Factors Affecting Satisfaction of Romantic Relationships

Based on previous research, there are several factors that affect the satisfaction of romantic relationships, among others

1. Attachment and intimacy are among the things that affect the satisfaction of romantic relationships (Prager, 1995). According to (Sternberg, 1986), intimacy is the individual's emotional feelings in which there are the self-disclosure so as to produce warmth and trust required in order to maintain a relationship with a partner. Lack of intimacy in a relationship can be caused by phubbing behavior because the partner is less focused on communicating (Halpern & Katz, 2017). Meanwhile, attachment is a specific long-term bond that is formed by a person with another person (Bowlby, 1979).
2. According to (Duvall, Duvall, & Miller, 1985), another thing that affects the satisfaction of romantic relationships is the existence of positive interactions between partners such as mutual respect, love, affection, support, and so on, the duration of a romantic relationship and the emotional maturity of individuals in romantic relationships. In addition, interpersonal interaction is also a predictor of romantic relationship satisfaction (Bradbury, Fincham, & Beach, 2000). Communication also affects the satisfaction of romantic relationships, where minimal communication can lead to a break in a relationship, while open communication and mutual understanding will provide satisfaction and happiness between partners (Hendrick et al., 1988). Positive communication skills and communication styles also affect the satisfaction of romantic relationships (Armenta-Hurtarte & Loving, 2008). In addition, the quality of communication also affects the level of satisfaction of a romantic relationship, which is influenced by the distance-based relationship which depends on the perception of each individual (Guldner & Swensen, 1995).

3. Gender differences also influence romantic relationships, where men and women have differences in making close contact and interacting (Prager, 1995). Men tend to like physical or sexual closeness and men are easier to overcome or even give in when faced with problems, while women tend to like verbal closeness and women tend to use constructive solutions when facing problems (Prager, 1995).

### 3.1.4. Satisfaction Aspects of Romantic Relationships

According to (Urbano-Contreras, Iglesias-García, & Martínez-González, 2017), there are two aspects of satisfaction in romantic relationships, among others

1. Emotional support

According to (Don & Hammond, 2017), emotional support consists of expressions of caring, reassurance or love. Emotional support can also be interpreted as a form of expression of empathy, attention, care, positive appreciation, feelings of being heard and attitudes to encourage others to focus on their goals (Cohen, Gottlieb, & Underwood, 2000; Sarafino & Smith, 2014). Willingness to listen to individual complaints has a positive impact, namely a means to release negative emotions and reduce anxiety and make individuals feel more valued, accepted and cared for by others (Cohen et al., 2000).

2. Social support

Social support can be called something that is obtained from other people who can be trusted, where something can be useful for the individual so that it can be seen that the person cares, appreciates and loves him (Kusrini & Prihartanti, 2014). Social support can also be interpreted as the degree of support given to others who have emotional relationships, referring to appreciation, comfort, self-respect, caring or other assistance (Sarafino & Smith, 2014). In addition, social support can be defined as the perception of the responsiveness and receptiveness of others to individual needs, which can overcome stress and anxiety (Cohen et al., 2000). Social support can come from someone who has an emotional relationship, such as parents, spouse, siblings, social contacts, community or pets (Taylor, 2014).

## 3.2. Pphubbing

### 3.2.1. Definition of Pphubbing

Neglectful behavior when around a partner who is in an intimate or romantic relationship is called partner phubbing (pphubbing) (Cizmeci; 2017; Roberts & David, 2016). Pphubbing was first created by Robert and David in 2016, which focuses more on phubbers (people who do phubbing) with their partners (Jihan & Rusli, 2019). According to Ducharme (2018), the word “phubbing” emerged in 2012 as part of a campaign for Macquarie Dictionary, an Australian English dictionary. An advertising agency called McCann Group invites expert dictionary compilers, writers and poets to come up with a new word that describes the behavior of ignoring others for the benefit of their cell phones. As a result, an Australian student named Alex Haigh came up with the word “phubbing”. After that, the McCann Group created the “Stop Phubbing” campaign to raise awareness of the issue.

Phubbing comes from two words, namely “phone” and “snubbing” (Roberts & David, 2016). According to (Roberts & David, 2016), phone means mobile phone, while snubbing means harassing, ignoring. In social interaction, “phubber” is defined as someone who phubs the people around him, while “phubbee” is defined as someone who accepts phubbing behavior (Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas, 2018b). Meanwhile, according to (Erzen, Odaci, & Yeniçeri, 2019) phubbing is a person’s behavior to stop communicating directly with others because they are affected by their cell phone. Phubbing can be described as an individual looking at his cell phone while talking to other people, dealing with cell phones and running away from interpersonal communication (Karadağ et al., 2016).

Phubbing can also be characterized by interrupting the conversation by picking up phone calls, replying to messages or checking posts on social media, operating cell phones to reply to messages or checking posts on social media while other people are talking, placing cell phones around sight, holding cell phones, secretly staring cell phones when communicating with others, and glancing at cell phones when communicating with others (Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas, 2018b; David & Roberts, 2017). Roberts & David (2016) states that phubbing occurs when someone is talking with friends or colleagues and sees other people glancing at their cell phone, answering phone calls, sending short messages (SMS), or checking notifications that appear on social media while they are communicate with someone.



### 3.2.2. Factors Causing the Appearance of Pphubbing

The cause of pphubbing is basically the same as the cause of phubbing itself because pphubbing is part of phubbing that focuses on couples (Roberts & David, 2016). Based on several studies, it was found that there were several causes for phubbing behavior, among others.

1. According to (Karadağ et al., 2015) phubbing occurs due to cell phone addiction, texting addiction, social media addiction, internet addiction and game addiction. The high need for mobile phones has consequences such as excessive cell phone use and a high level of involvement with cell phones which then leads to cell phone addiction (Karadağ et al., 2015). Several studies have argued that problematic behavior in cell phone use is closely related to internet addiction and has some similar consequences (Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas, 2016). Cellphone addiction is included in the criteria for addiction in the DSM-IV which is defined as addictive behavior which includes psychological problems associated with disharmonious use of mobile phones (Roberts & David, 2016). In addition, addiction to the internet can be caused by the ease with which it offers communication to finding information (Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas, 2016). Research conducted by (Karadağ et al., 2015) show that technology such as cell phones alone will not be a problem, but will cause problems because of the applications in it, which are closely related to the internet, such as social media, search applications, and so on. Lastly, game addiction is caused by individuals who do not have time management skills using games to escape problems and as a means of mental relaxation (Karadağ et al., 2015).
2. (Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas, 2016) found that cell phone addiction predicts the emergence of phubbing behavior due to internet addiction, FoMO (Fear of Missing Out), and low self-control. FoMO can be defined as a person's fear, worry and anxiety that may be related to being left behind regarding something new such as news, trends and others as well as conversations that occur in social circles (Przybylski, Murayama, DeHaan, & Gladwell, 2013). According to (Carbonell, Oberst, & Beranuy, 2013), FoMO is closely related to the excessive use of cell phones, which predicts phubbing behavior (Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas, 2016). The fear of being left behind important information, for example in social media, relates to the problem of using a cell phone, where someone prefers to operate a cell phone rather than interacting with the people around him (Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas, 2016).

3. Personality is also a factor in the emergence of phubbing behavior (Al-Saggaf & O'Donnell, 2019). Research conducted by (T'ng, Ho, & Sew Kim, 2018) found that someone who has a high openness personality tends to have less phubbing behavior, while someone who has high negative emotions tends to have more phubbing behavior. In addition, someone who has a narcissistic personality tends to have major problems in the use of social media and cell phones, which predict the emergence of phubbing behavior (Al-Saggaf, MacCulloch, & Wiener, 2018). In addition, a boredom personality is also prone to predict the emergence of phubbing even though the effect is relatively small (Al-Saggaf et al., 2018).

### 3.2.3. Pphubbing impact

Based on several studies, partner phubbing (pphubbing) causes low relationship satisfaction (Halpern & Katz, 2017; McDaniel & Coyne, 2016; Roberts & David, 2016; Wang et al., 2017). The higher the phubbing behavior, the lower the relationship satisfaction between married adult couples in China (Wang et al., 2017) and also on couples in the United States (Roberts & David, 2016). In addition, pphubbing also predicts the emergence of depression in partners (Wang et al., 2017). Pphubbing also leads to feelings of jealousy towards partners (Krasnova et al., 2016) and a lack of intimacy with partners (Halpern & Katz, 2017). According to (Roberts & David, 2016) pphubbing has an indirect impact on a person's depression level through relationship satisfaction and life satisfaction. The use of cell phones in a relationship or pphubbing can be a problem in romantic relationships by increasing conflict and causing poor relationship satisfaction and marriage (McDaniel & Coyne, 2016; Roberts & David, 2016). In addition, the presence of cell phones, especially when around a partner can interfere with closeness, connection and conversation quality (Przybylski et al., 2013).

### 3.2.4. Pphubbing Aspects

According to (Roberts & David, 2016), pphubbing has 3 aspects that complement one another, among others

1. Individual attitudes towards cell phones, namely how individuals behave towards cell phones when around a partner which can interfere with communication, for example referring to the attitude of individuals picking up cell phones that ring in the middle of a conversation with a partner.

2. Involvement with cell phones is how individuals try to put their cell phones close to their reach, for example holding a cell phone when they are with a partner or putting their cell phone close to their reach when they are with a partner.
3. Cellphone addiction can be defined as addictive behavior which includes psychological problems associated with disharmonious use of cell phones (Roberts & David, 2016). This is characterized by the individual's inability to control the use of cell phones when together with other people, especially partners (Chotpitaya-sunondh & Douglas, 2016). For example, using a cell phone when spending time with a partner.

### 3.3. Research Related of Pphubbing and Romantic Relationship Satisfaction

Research that is associated with pphubbing and romantic relationship satisfaction still done as classified in the new variable that was created by Roberts dan David on 2016. Based on the research that is conducted by (McDaniel & Coyne, 2016; Roberts & David, 2016) find that pphubbing damages the romantic relationship which is caused by the conflict, the decline in the satisfaction of romantic relationship dan well-being a person. In addition, the research that is carried out by (Miller-Ott et al., 2012), stating that the phone handheld relates directly to the level of romantic relationship satisfaction who is owned by someone, which users phone handheld in relation romantic can improve the appearance of expectations that high against the couple and conflict such as the feeling of restricted liberty and controlled by the couple. Another study conducted by (Krasnova et al., 2016) also shows that pphubbing behavior in romantic relationships is associated with increased feelings of jealousy, which is related to romantic relationship satisfaction.

## 4. Conclusion

Based on the researchs that has been reviewed, it can conclude that pphubbing damaged romantic relationships caused by conflict, decreased relationship satisfaction, a person's well-being, increased feelings of jealousy, an indirect impact on a person's depression level, a lack of intimacy, can interfere with closeness, connection and conversation quality. Thus, the higher the phubbing behavior, the lower the relationship satisfaction. Therefore, a research on these two variables are needed to conduct.

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