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"Who's Doing the Phubbing?": Exploring Individual Factors that Predict Phubbing Behaviors During Interpersonal Interactions

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Phubbing is a relatively new phenomenon (Blachnio & Przepiorka, 2018) and is conceptualized as a communicative behavior that occurs during interpersonal interactions when one or more communicators pays more attention to their phone than the actual face-to-face interaction. Framed by Social Information Processing Theory, the current investigation sought to understand what personality and demographic characteristics are associated with one's likelihood to engage in phubbing. One hundred fifty college students participated in an online survey about their phubbing behaviors. Results revealed the following: phubbing behaviors are positively associated with self-absorption, online self-presentation, and online impression management tactics; women are significantly more likely to engage in phubbing compared to men; and, one's frequency of texting behaviors are associated with his/her phubbing behaviors. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed, along with limitations and future directions.

Keywords: computer-mediated communication, Social Information Processing Theory, phubbing, self-absorption, image management, self-presentation

The advent of communicative technologies, chiefly smartphones and social media, have significantly affected the way we interact with others face-to-face (Roberts & David, 2016). In particular, our face-to-face interactions are now frequently interrupted by our desire to check our smartphones for texts, social media updates, or to simply stay connected to our digital lives. This is the essence of phubbing, a term that derives from the words "phone" and "snubbing." Phubbing occurs when a communicator is physically present with another individual but snubs that person by paying more attention to their phone rather than engaging in conversation (Roberts & David, 2016). Recent research has discovered that phubbing can decrease satisfaction with interpersonal interactions (Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas, 2018); even the mere presence of a phone during face-to-face interactions significantly decreases the quality of interpersonal communication (Misra, Cheng, Genevie, & Yuan, 2014). Phubbing also has a negative influence on mental well-being. Specifically, it makes the other communicator feel excluded and threatens human need for meaningful existence. Relationship research also identified phubbing to be a critical risk to low marital satisfaction (Seppala, 2017).

Due to the negative impacts of phubbing on interpersonal processes, it is important to further understand what individual characteristics might be significantly associated with the enactment of phubbing behaviors. Framed by Social Information Processing Theory (SIPT), the current study seeks to explore potential antecedents of phubbing behaviors, including biological sex, phone use frequency, self-absorption, online self-presentation, and online image management. The following review of literature will first articulate the theoretical framework, review relevant literature on phubbing, and define the correlates under consideration.

Review of Literature

Social Information Processing Theory (SIPT)

SIPT is a theory of computer-mediated communication (CMC) that seeks to understand how relationships develop via CMC technologies (Walther, 2008). In particular, SIPT argues that individuals have unique communicative opportunities (i.e., hyperpersonal affordances) via CMC that are not present in face-to-face (FtF) communication. For instance, CMC is asynchronous, and thus, communicators have time to edit messages before

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they are sent. Also, nonverbal elements of communication that are relatively difficult to control in FtF interaction are removed via CMC. And, because nonverbal elements are eliminated in CMC, communicators are afforded additional cognitive energy toward message composition and impression management (Walter, 2007). Moreover, the theory posits that CMC has a potential hyperpersonal effect, which refers to the effect the aforementioned hyperpersonal affordances have on individuals using CMC to form closer, more intimate relationships than they would FtF (West & Turner, 2018). For this current study, SIPT will be used as a framework to understand the concept of impression management as related to CMC; specifically, phubbing behaviors.

Impression management is a core principle in SIPT, as the theory asserts that individuals are motivated to form favorable impressions online (West & Turner, 2018). In addition, the hyperpersonal affordances of CMC provide individuals unique opportunities to edit their online identities in ways that are not possible FtF. Shaw and Gant (2002) contend, "online anonymity allows people to express and experiment with aspects of their identities that they might feel compelled to suppress or keep hidden in their everyday lives" (p. 169). Because of this, it stands to reason that individuals might prefer CMC over FtF interaction for some interactions or under some circumstances, as it affords communicative opportunities not granted by FtF. In fact, Babkirk, Leuhring-Jones, and Dennis (2015) discovered that individuals tended to prefer CMC over FtF when they had higher depressive symptoms. These ideas are at the core of the current study; specifically, we seek to understand what individual characteristics predict someone's likelihood to engage in phubbing, which is a behavior that implies preference for CMC over FtF, as individuals are literally choosing to communicate via CMC even when they are FtF with another individual. The following sections will address recent phubbing research, as well as define the individual variables that might help predict one's phubbing tendencies.

Phubbing

As mentioned earlier, phubbing occurs within interpersonal relationships when two individuals are interacting FtF and one, or both communicators, turns their attention to their phone, away from the FtF interaction (Cizmeci, 2017a). Phubbing is multidimensional and is comprised of four aspects including: phone addiction, internet addiction, game addiction, and social media addiction (Karadağ et al., 2016). Scholars have suggested that younger individuals may be more inclined to engage in phubbing to have some sort of escape and solitude from the world (Turkle, 2012). It also makes sense that younger individuals would engage in phubbing, as they are part of a generation that has grown up with CMC technologies. Phubbing has become more of a normal and accepted behavior in society (Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas, 2016). In one study, phubbers claimed that phubbing is now a normalized behavior. They justified this by claiming that smartphones are an integral part of most people's lives, and everyone engages in phubbing behavior at some point, so everyone is used to it by now (Karadağ et al., 2016). Despite the so-called normalcy of phubbing, it still has been found to have negative effects on communication and interpersonal relationships (Karadağ et al., 2016).

Effects of phubbing. Karadağ et al. (2016) claim that phubbing can have serious negative effects on interpersonal relationships. For instance, they found that those who were being "phubbed" felt as if their conversational partner did not take them seriously, and that they were not being understood or fully heard to due lack of or partial attention from their conversational partner. Moreover, phubbing has been found to lead to depression, lower well-being, and relationship dissatisfaction (Roberts & David, 2016). This is likely because individuals view phubbing as a face threatening act because it diminishes their real-life conversation (Maginnis, 2011). Worse, phubbing can lead to resentment (Rainie & Zickuhr, 2015), less trust (Cameron & Webster, 2011), and jealousy (Krasnova, Abramova, Notter, & Baumann, 2016). Moreover, it leads to negative perceptions of communication quality and negatively affects individuals need to belong, self-esteem, need for control, and for a meaningful existence (Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas, 2018). Although the effects of phubbing have been empirically examined, less attention has been given to the potential predictors, or individual characteristics of "phubbers."

Reasons for phubbing. Chasombat (2014) found that phubbing occurs for multiple reasons. As Angeluci (2015) states "[t]he need to stay connected and communicate all of the time[,] fear of being mentally alone[,] the need to be the center of attention[, and] the need to escape from social group reunions of awkward silences" (p. 194). In addition, others have pointed out that phubbing stems from internet addiction, and internet addiction stems from the fear of missing out (Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas, 2016). Moreover, Blanchnio and Przepiorka (2018)

found that phubbing stems from Facebook addiction, which stems from lower levels of self-esteem and life satisfaction. Phubbing can also simply be a byproduct of boredom (Cizmeci, 2017a). Extending on this line of inquiry that explores the antecedents of phubbing behavior, the current investigation seeks to understand what individual characteristics are associated with phubbing likelihood.

Individual characteristics associated with phubbing. The primary goal of the current study is to understand what individual traits predict one's proclivity to phub. Using SIPT, it is argued that individuals are motivated to maintain their online identities, which increases their likelihood to phub; in particular, we argue that individuals who have higher online impression management concerns, online self-presentation concerns, and self-absorption, are significantly more likely to phub during FtF interactions.

Self-presentation relates to Goffman's (1967) notion, of *face* or the image we wish to project to others. Brown and Levinson's (1987) extend on this notion of face to argue that individuals possess two dimensions of face: positive face and negative face. Positive face refers to "self-presentational concerns lead individuals to approach or engage with others to foster social connection," whereas negative face refers to "self-presentational concerns lead individuals to disengage from others or exercise restraint in expression out of the interest of respecting boundaries and/or maintaining independence" (Feaster, 2010, p. 117). According to Mehdizadeh (2010) online self-presentation is correlated with narcissism. Due to individuals' desire to form positive impressions online (Walther, 2008), the current investigation focuses on individuals' self-presentation concerns of positive face. Specifically, individuals often seek to present themselves positively in online contexts (Feaster, 2010), thus, it stands to reason that individuals with high self-presentation concerns would be more likely to phub, as phubbing could provide them an opportunity to engage in self-presentation behaviors to a larger audience online than the singular audience present in the FtF interaction.

Impression management is similar to self-presentation with regard to face concerns, but more specifically refers to the intentional manipulation of information to create and foster positive impressions of oneself in the minds of others (Blasberg, Rogers, & Paulhus, 2013). In a similar vein to self-presentation, it is speculated that individuals with high impression management concerns would be more likely to engage in phubbing, as this behavior would allow them more time and opportunity to construct their online identity.

Additionally, self-absorption, defined as one's proclivity to have "an excessive, sustained, and rigid focus on the self" (McKenzie & Hoyle, 2008, p. 726). Self-absorption, similarly to self-presentation, is also correlated with narcissism (Trumpeter, Watson, & O'Leary, 2006), and may also share a significant association with phubbing. In particular, we contend that FtF interactions often require people to listen and attempt to understand others (Hargie, 2017), which might be challenging for self-absorbed individuals. Consequently, individuals with a high level of self-absorption might prefer to interact on CMC, as they can focus on and enhance their own personal online identity, rather than engage in a FtF interaction; phubbing provides this opportunity. With this said, the following hypothesis is proposed:

> *H1:* There is a positive correlation between phubbing with the following individual traits: *1a*) online self-presentation; *1b)* online impression management; and, *1c*) self-absorption.

Another point of interest for this study is the potential influence of biological sex on the enactment of phubbing behaviors. In particular, biological sex may have an effect on the enactment of phubbing, however there is an inconclusive finding on sex differences in phubbing behavior, which warrants further investigation. Many studies report that females tend to engage in phubbing more than their male partners and have higher rates of phone obsession (Blanchnio & Przepiorka, 2018; Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas, 2016; Karadağ et al., 2016). However, another study found that males tend to engage in phubbing behavior more than females (Cizmeci, 2017b). Karadağ et al. (2016) attempts to explain this discrepancy with their findings when they note that phubbing by females tends to be more related to social media and texting addiction, whereas males' phubbing behaviors are more related to internet and game addiction. Due to inconclusive findings regarding sex differences in phubbing behaviors, the following research question is posed:

> *RQ1*: Do women or men report engaging in more phubbing behaviors?

Finally, it is believed that individuals' self-reported time spent on social media is associated with phubbing likelihood, as previous research has found that phubbing results from internet addiction (Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas, 2016) and Facebook addiction (Blanchnio & Przepiorka, 2018). Moreover, approximately thirty-seven percent of smartphone users report spending five or more hours per day on their phones (Gallup, 2018), and approximately fifty-one percent of Facebook users report visiting Facebook multiple times per day (Pew Research Center, 2018). These statistics indicate that adults are spending more time on their phones and social media, and this increase in consumption might influence interpersonal interactions in the form of phubbing. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

> *H2*: The more time individuals spend on social media each day, the more phubbing they tend to engage in during interpersonal interactions.

Method

Recruitment Procedure

Undergraduate students from a large public university in California were recruited via email to participate in this study. The recruitment email included a brief summary of the study and that student participation will be anonymous. Those that were interested clicked on the link to participate in the online survey hosted on Qualtrics.com. We originally received 153 responses. Only the responses from students who own smartphones were kept.

Participants

One hundred and fifty (N = 150) students who were enrolled in a public university in Southern California participated in this study. From 150 participants, 50 identified as males (n = 50), while 100 identified as females (n = 100). For participant ethnicity, 36% identified as Hispanic/Latino/a (n = 54), 24.7% identified as Caucasian (n = 37), and 24.7% identified as Asian (n = 37), while 10.7% identified as mixed race (n = 16), 2% identified as African/Black (n = 3), 1.3% identified as Native American (n = 2), and less than 1% identified as Pacific Islander (n = 1). More than 80% of the participants reported to be 18 to 25 years old while the other 20% were 26 to 34 years old. 5% of respondents reported spending less than 1 hour a day on social media and texting, while 70% reported spending 1 to 3 hours a day, and 25% more than 3 hours a day. When asked how long they have owned a smartphone, 4% said 1 to 3 years, 48% said 4 to 6 years, 30% said 7 to 9 years, and 18% said 10 years and more. Participants self-rated their smartphone usage per day, which includes any function they use on the phone, 2% reported "Rarely," 18% reported "Sometimes," while 80% reported using their phones "Often" and "Always."

Measurements

Phubbing. A person's tendency to use their phones during interpersonal interactions is measured by a revised instrument containing 6 items. This self-report scale is based on Roberts and David's (2016) Phubbing Scale. Participants responded on a five- point Likert-type scale (1 = *Never* to 5 = *Always*). Sample items include: "During a typical mealtime with others, I generally pull out my phone and check it," "I glance at my cell phone when others are talking to me," and "I place my cell phone outside where people can see when I'm with others." Higher scores indicate higher amount of phubbing behavior engaged by the respondent. The Cronbach's alpha for this scale is .82. M = 2.83; SD = .62.

Online self-presentation. An individual's level of online self-presentation concerns is measured by an adapted version of the Self-Presentation Tactic Scale (Lee, Quigley, Nesler, Corbett, & Tedeschi, 1999). This scale includes twelve different tactics on how people try to present themselves and control how others think of them. Participants responded on a five- point Likert-type scale (1 = V*ery Infrequently* to 5 = *Very Frequently*). Sample items include: "I justify my behavior online to reduce negative reactions from others," "I try to get the approval of others online before doing something they might perceive negatively," and "I compliment people online to get them on my side." The Cronbach's alpha coefficient is .80. M = 2.64; SD = .55.

Online impression management. A person's level of tendency to manage other people's impression of them online is measured by an adapted version of the original Impression Management Scale (Turnley & Bolino,

2001). The adapted scale contains an item from each of the five subscales including ingratiation, self-promotion, exemplification, supplication, and intimidation. However, all items were revised to reflect the nature of social media interaction. A shortened scale was used for two primary reasons. First, there is a clear conceptual-operational link between the construct of online impression management and the selection of items for the current study. The focus is not on each Impression Management (IM) strategy but rather the holistic sense of IM (i.e., how much one creates and fosters positive impressions of oneself in the minds of others). Second, the abbreviated scale alleviates survey fatigue error that usually occurs with long surveys. In order to test the unidimensionality of the 5 items, they were submitted to a factor analysis with principal axis factoring. All 5 items loaded on to a single factor (Cronbach's alpha = .70; $M = 2.82$; $SD = .70$). Participants responded on a 5-point Likert-Type scale ranging from 1 = *Never* to 5 = *Always*. Sample items include: "I talk proudly about my experience or education on social media," "I praise my colleagues for their accomplishments on social media so they will consider me a nice person," and "I post about arriving at work/class early to look dedicated."

Self-absorption. A person's level of obsession in one's own interests, emotions, and situation is measured by an adapted self-absorption scale created by McKenzie and Hoyle (2008). The original scale contains two subscales: private and public self-absorption. Four items were selected from each subscale for the present study. Participants responded on a Likert-Type scale ranging from 1 = *Not at all like me* to 5 = *Very much like me*. Sample items include: "I think about myself more than anything else," "When I try to think of something other than myself, I cannot," "It upsets me when people I meet don't like me," and "When I'm about to meet someone for the first time, I worry about whether they'll like me." The Cronbach's alpha for private self-absorption is .82 and public self-absorption is .83. $M = 2.59$; $SD = .82$.

Results

Correlations between Phubbing and Individual Traits

Online self-presentation and phubbing. It was hypothesized that phubbing would correlate positively with online self-presentation. The correlation coefficient $r(148) = .30$, $p < .001$, R-squared = .09 indicates that the two variables are significantly positively correlated. The data suggests that individuals who score high in online self-presentation are more likely to score high in phubbing as well. Therefore, hypothesis 1a was supported.

Online impression management and phubbing. It was hypothesized that phubbing would correlate positively with online impression management. The correlation coefficient $r(148) = .14$, $p < .05$, R-squared = .02 indicates that the two variables are significantly positively correlated. The results suggest that individuals who score high in online impression management are more likely to score high in phubbing. Therefore, hypothesis 1b was supported.

Self-absorption and phubbing. It was hypothesized that phubbing would correlate positively with self-absorption. The correlation coefficient $r(148) = .20$, $p < .01$, R-squared = .04, indicates that the two variables are significantly positively correlated. The results suggest that higher scores in self-absorption are related to higher scores in phubbing. Therefore, hypothesis 1c was supported.

Table 1

Correlations between Phubbing, Online Self-Presentation, Online Impression Management, and Self-Absorption

	1	2	3	4
1.Phubbing	---			
2.Online Self-Presentation	.30**	---		
3.Online Impression Management	.14*	.48**	---	
4.Self-Absorption	.20**	.56**	.36**	---

Note. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$

Sex Differences in Phubbing

Research question one asked, do women or men report engaging in more phubbing behaviors? An independent-samples t-test was conducted to investigate the connection between biological sex and phubbing. The independent variable, sex, contained two levels: male (n = 50) and female (n = 100). The dependent variable was phubbing behavior. The t-test obtained a significant result, $t(148) = 2.71$ $p = < .01$, $\eta^2 = .02$. The results suggest that female participants (M = 2.93 SD = .60) engage in phubbing behavior significantly more than male participants (M = 2.64 SD = .60). While the effect size is quite small, based on the result of significance testing, research question one was supported.

Time Spent on Social Media and Phubbing

Our second hypothesis stated the more time individuals spent on social media a day, the more phubbing they tend to do during interpersonal interactions. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to investigate the connection between time spent on social media per day and phubbing. The independent variable, time spent on social media per day, contained six levels: less than one hour (n = 8), more than 1 hour (n = 24), more than two hours (n = 45), more than 3 hours (n = 26), more than four hours (n = 19), and more than 5 hours a day (n = 28). The dependent variable was phubbing. The ANOVA obtained a significant result, $F(5, 149) = 6.92$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .19$. The result suggests that there are significant differences between six groups. A Post Hoc analysis was conducted to further probe the differences between groups. According to LSD Post Hoc analysis, there are significant differences between people who spend less than 1 hour a day on social media as compared to those who spend more than 1 hour, 2 hours, 3 hours, 4 hours, and 5+ hours (Table 2).

Table 2

ANOVA Comparisons of Phubbing from Six Time Spent on Social Media Groups

			LSD Post Hoc Comparisons				
Group	Mean	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5
1. Less Than 1 hour a day	2.02	0.59	---				
2. More than 1 hour a day	2.54	0.46	<.05	---			
3. More than 2 hours a day	2.77	0.61	<.01	.12	---		
4. More than 3 hours a day	3.01	0.64	< .001	<.01	.08	---	
5. More than 4 hours a day	3.00	0.51	<.001	<.01	.14	.94	---
6. More than 5 hours a day	3.31	0.57	<.001	<.001	<.01	.45	.44

Discussion

In summary, this study found the following: 1) women reported engaging in more phubbing behaviors than men, 2) phubbing is positively associated with online self-presentation, online impression management, and self-absorption, and, 3) individuals who spent more time on social media per day tend to engage in more phubbing

behaviors during interpersonal interactions. The findings in this study indicate the prevalence of phubbing behaviors among young adults. The majority of participants reported checking their social media at least a couple of hours a day, and they also do that while they are supposedly interacting with others FtF. Effect sizes of the variables under consideration on phubbing behaviors were small to moderate (ranged from 2% - 19%), which indicates that biological sex, frequency of social media use, self-absorption, and online self-presentation and identity management explain a moderate, yet significant, amount of variation in phubbing.

Findings reflect the recent article on the danger of phubbing (Castellano, 2018), in which Castellano points out the obsession young adults have with phones; he states, on average, a young adult checks his/her phone 80 times a day. It makes sense that participants who reported spending more time on their phones each day, also phub more during FtF interactions. It is also important to point out that our participants are college students. The current generation of traditional college students are "digitally hyperconnected" and constantly on their smartphones and social media (Cheong, Shuter, & Suwinyattichaiporn, 2016). Future work might consider exploring how age moderates the effects of phubbing on interpersonal interactions; that is, younger individuals might perceive phubbing as more socially acceptable than older generations, as they have grown up with mobile devices for much of their lives.

The present study found sex differences in phubbing, specifically, women engage in phubbing behaviors more than men. This could be a number of reasons. Pew Research Center (2017) found that women spend more time on social media than men, and the number of women that have multiple social media accounts is higher than men. Additionally, this sex difference could reflect gender roles; that is, women are often socialized to be more relationally oriented compared to men. Thus, women may engage in more phubbing in order to maintain multiple relationships at once. Future work is needed to further flesh out the effects of biological sex, and potentially gender roles, on phubbing behaviors. Specifically, research should examine the motivations for phubbing (e.g., maintain relationships, nervousness, expectations, etc.), which may also help explain the sex differences in phubbing.

Our study provides evidence for the associations between phubbing, online self-presentation, online impression management, and self-absorption. Consistent with previous research, individuals that are more concerned with their online image also measured higher in narcissism (Mehdizadeh, 2010). Logically, it makes sense that individuals who are more concerned of their online self-presentation would spend more time on their phones and social media curating the perfect image while ignoring his/her surroundings including FtF interactants. Furthermore, it stands to reason that individuals with a high concern for online self-presentation believe phubbing is socially acceptable and appropriate; however, further research is needed to make such an empirical claim.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Social Information Processing Theory (SIPT; Walther, 2008) can help interpret current findings with more clarity. In particular, SIPT contends that individuals are motivated to create and maintain positive online images; moreover, individuals are able to explore facets of their identity online that they might not be able to do in person. However, little research has explored what individual characteristics make someone more inclined to invest in their online identity and self-presentation. We argued that the engagement in phubbing behaviors represents a high concern for online identity and self-presentation, as individuals are choosing to communicate on their phone instead of with the person in front of them. Consistent with this theorizing, results indicate that women, frequent social media users, highly self-absorbed individuals, and individuals with high online self-presentation and image management concerns are significantly more likely to engage in phubbing; consequently, these individuals might be more concerned with maintaining their identities via CMC technologies. This might help inform future SIPT work; in particular, are we moving toward a society where online identity management is more important, and attended to more, than our face-to-face relationships? Moreover, are younger generations more accepting of phubbing behavior due to the perceived importance of maintaining an online identity? Many of our daily tasks and professional responsibilities have also shifted to an online space that is accessible via our smartphones – might this also explain rises in phubbing and perceived acceptability of phubbing?

With regard to practical implications, we believe current findings highlight the fast-changing nature of communication; that is, individuals are beginning to use more CMC technologies, and they are even deciding to engage in CMC while they are FtF with other relational partners. Empirical evidence suggests that phubbing has deleterious effects on individuals' well-being, as well interactional quality (Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas, 2018).

Consequently, we believe educational and intervention efforts need to be implemented to inform young adults of the potential consequences of phubbing. However, such efforts should also respect the autonomy and agency of individuals in a way that does not disparage or demean their choice to phub, but instead equips them with communicative tools to better navigate FtF interactions that may be affected by phubbing. Furthermore, self-awareness is a key factor of communication competence (Floyd, 2016), and making individuals more aware of their own phubbing behaviors, as well the effects phubbing can have on relationships, can help individuals be more conscientious of their communication.

Limitations and Future Directions

While the present study adds to the body of research on phubbing, it is not without limitations. First, the sample size may not be ideal for generalization. We received 150 responses, although the sample is ethnically diverse, more responses are needed to make a generalizable conclusion. Future research should consider recruiting more participants and perhaps those of different age groups, as the current study was homogenous with regard to age. It is likely that younger individuals engage in much more phubbing behaviors than older adults, as millennials and generation z are used to having smartphones in their lives.

The second limitation is the moderate correlations and effect sizes. As discussed in the results section, phubbing, online self-presentation, online impression management, and self-absorption are significantly associated to one another; also, phubbing differed significantly between men and women, as well as between different social media usage frequencies. However, these correlations and effect sizes are in the mid-range. Future research should examine other individual characteristics that might increase one's likelihood to engage in phubbing, for instance: self-esteem, social anxiety, narcissism, loneliness, etc.

In addition, future research could examine how certain communicative contextual features (e.g., physical location, relationship type and closeness, etc.) influence one's likelihood to phub. Additionally, research might also seek to understand the communicative goals and expectations individuals have for engaging in phubbing (i.e., Why do people phub while FtF with other individuals?; What expectations do people have for their own, as well as others', phubbing behavior?; etc.). Uncovering these more nuanced aspects of phubbing will help scholars obtain a more holistic understanding of this unique communicative phenomenon.

Lastly, this study is a cross-sectional quantitative investigation of phubbing. While we are able to identify the characteristics of phubbers, we do not understand why these groups of people engage in more phubbing than others. Perhaps a qualitative interview or focus group could offer a more holistic and interpretive understanding of the reasons individuals have for phubbing, perceived appropriateness of phubbing, and strategies for dealing with phubbing behaviors during FtF interactions. In addition, phubbing is an interpersonal behavior; thus, dyadic data studies (e.g., friends, romantic partners, family members, etc.) would help scholars understand both actor and partner effects of phubbing on FtF interactions.

Conclusion

The surface has only been scratched in terms of understanding phubbing and its complexities. While we have a clearer empirical understanding of some of the correlates of phubbing behaviors, significantly more work is needed to understand the expectations, motivations, and influences of phubbing in interpersonal interactions. This is no easy feat, however, as the technological landscape changes so quickly, it is challenging for research to keep up with these changes.

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