INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES BULLETIN
ISSN: (E) 3007-1917 (P) 3007-1909
Volume 4, Issue 3, 2026

FEAR OF MISSING OUT, PHUBBING, AND RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION AMONG SPOUSES

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19106598

Received	Accepted	Published
17 January 2026	03 March 2026	16 March 2026

ABSTRACT

Relationship satisfaction plays a very significant role in spouses. It's a key of successful marital life. In the present study predictors of marital satisfaction, role of digital communications and its effects on spousal bond have been studied. The current study aims to identify the indirect role of fear of missing out and partner phubbing in relationship satisfaction. Sample consisted of married working spouses (N=200), Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) Scale (Przybylski, Murayama, DeHann, & Gladwell, 2013; α=.84), Partner Phubbing Scale (Robert & David, 2015; α=.85), and Relationship Assessment scale by Hendreick (1988; α=.84) were administered to collect the data. Results drawn by using SPSS indicated that there was a significant positive relationship between FOMO and phubbing while phubbing inversely effects relationship satisfaction. Moreover, hierarchical regression analysis confirmed that FOMO and phubbing are the strong predictors of relationship satisfaction. Gender differences were also seen in partner phubbing. Furthermore, results showed that nuclear family system reduces relationship satisfaction by intensifying the feeling of missing out and repeated usage of mobile phone. This study would help in understanding devastating consequences of smart devices in matrimonial associations. The implication of this study is for marital counselor, therapist, and psychologist.

Keywords: *Digital communication, Fear of Missing Out, Phubbing, Relationship Satisfaction.*

INTRODUCTION

The people of twenty first century is considered a "digital generation" due to their accessibility to get an access with digital devices as computers internet and smart gadgets are attractive for all age groups (Moreno, Jelenchick, & Christakis, 2013; Costa, Patrao, & Machado, 2019). With every passing year Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) are becoming necessary part of modern man's life due to its function (Reyes & Cayubit, 2018). Moreover, Adekunmisi, Ajala, &Iyoro, (2013) used the term "Information Highway" for internet as it has made the whole world as global village through its connectedness with computers (Hamburger & Hayat, 2011).

The fast incursion and tremendously increasing progress of internet in recent era has also paved the way for the advancement of social media. Social media is characterized by using numerous websites and solicitations that allows users to generate and share material or involve in social networking (Heffner, 2016).Social networking sites (SNSs) are renowned social media (Mayfield, 2008) that are also called virtual societies (Kuss& Griffiths, 2011), are currently considered as

modern platforms where people exchange their information on youtube, facebook, instagram, and messanger (Kalpidou,Costin, & Morris, 2011).Facebook, tweeter, instagram, messanger, and whatsapp are some types of social media, where billions of people make their accounts to remain connected with the global world. Researchers have become more interested to investigate consequences of using online social networking sites.

The use of the internet is somehow good to be aware with the whole world but now a day massive use of internet or social media websites is alarming as people generally and youth specifically becoming socially alone, they have poor kin relationships and their bindings have become weaker (Balhara, Mahapatra, Sharma, &Bhargava, 2018).Out of these problems one is fear of missing out (FoMO) that can be described as experiencing persistent apprehension that others might be enjoying rewardingexperiences that one hasbeen absent" (Przybylski, Murayama, DeHaan, and Gladwell, 2013). Individual uses these smart devices abnormally and so intensively that he forgets about his current environment. Such type of behaviors drags an individual to the cyber world where he snubs the presence of others. Researchers name this behavior 'phubbing'. Phubbing refers to individuals'snubbing others by glancing at their smartphones during face to face communication and avoiding interpersonal interaction or maintaining eye-contact (Karadağ et al. 2015). When this behavior repeatedly occurs during one-to-one communication it reduces the relationship quality, as the phubbed individual feels insult, worthlessness, and decreased self-esteem. Thus ultimately relationship satisfaction is declined by the excessive usage of smart technologies, especially smartphone.

Smart phones have fueled up the fire of connectivity due to its omnipresence with permanent online access on this device. But problematic internet use either on desktops, laptops or smart phones is adversely affecting physical and psychological health of all its users. Evidences have proved that problematic use of these technologies is directly affectingphysical health, emotional and psychological well-being of children, and people of all ages and causing problematic behavior, pro stress and anxiety personalities (Baker &Algorta, 2016).Research evidences and relevant theoretical background has elaborated that excessive contact with social media is causing sever belonging problems with intimate relations. On the other side inaccessibility with the smart gadgets promote FoMO which in turns provoke phubbing behavior. The present study is aimed to investigate effects of fear of missing out and snubbing on dyad relationship satisfaction. Twenty first century is the era of digital age. With the growing technology and easy availability of smart gadgets the world has become a global village. The advancement has affected all the spheres of human life across the globe. Marital life and spousal relation has no extinction. The institution of marriage has been haunted by the over use of these smart gadgets all over the world. Marital dissatisfaction, lack of harmony and collaboration in husband and wife, and spousal indifference has also been growing in our culture since last decades. There are many reasons of marital problems as lack of compatibility, unemployment, physical or psychological issues, etc., excessive use of smart phone is also considered to have a gross effect on spousal relationship. So the present study has been conducted to explore whether FoMO and phubbing exercise a significant effect in Pakistani culture. No indigenous published study is present on this very phenomenon yet. The current research is a pioneering effort to highlight the relationship issues caused by excessive smartphone use. The findings of the research will be helpful to realize individual and collective conscious of the society to value physical presence of relations and limit social e-networking.

Method

The study was quantitative in nature. It found out the relationship among fear of missing out, phubbing and relationship satisfaction, so correlational research design was followed to conduct the study. A type of non-probability sampling "purposive sampling" technique was used to select sample for the study. A sample (N =200) of married spouses (marital duration at least

two years, using smart phone at least 2 hours a day, having account on at least one social media website as tweeter, face book, instagram, or using whatsapp) working in different organizations (schools, colleges, universities, banks, courts, self-employed, hospitals, engineering, private firms etc) age 23-59 years were included in this study on the basis of availability. Married dyads from Lahore, kasur, and Narowal were included in the study.

To gather sample characteristics demographics sheet was devised by incorporating important individual factors involved in excessive smartphone usage as age, gender, qualification, marriage length, time spent on social media were included. Moreover job status; working hours, age at the time of marriage, organizations' name, number of dependents and family system either nuclear or joint were inquired in the demographic sheet.

Fear of missing out scale (Przybylski, Murayama, deHann, &Gladwell, 2013) is a 10 item scale that assesses intensity of the fear of missing out. FoMO is a five point likert scale including response options from not at all true of me (1), to extremely true of me (5). The internal consistency of the scale is Cronbech α = .90 (Przybylski, Murayama, deHann, &Gladwell, 2013).

Partner phubbing scale (James A. Robert and Meredith E. David, 2015) Partner phubbing scale is 9 item scale that uses five point likert options with response sets ranged from "never" (1), to "All the times" (5). The construct reliability estimates for the phubbing scale is .93 (Robert, & Meredith, 2016).

Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) developed by Hendrick (1988) is used to assess an individual's satisfaction with his/her spousal relationship. The scale contains of 7 items and five point likert response options to rate the items. Alpha reliability of the scale is .91 (Vaughn &Baier, 1999).

Results

Data sheet was screened out carefully prior to process statistical analyses for each of the variables of the study. The actual and potential minimum and maximum scores were calculated to determine the correct record of data on data sheet.

Descriptive and reliability analyses of the scales were observed by calculating Cronbach alpha reliability of FoMO, Partner Phubbing Scale and Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS). Table 1 indicates that all variables have acceptable reliability*(.84, .85 and .84)* values, indicating that scales are reliable for current sample.

Table 2 shows highly significant positive correlation between FoMO and Phubbing i.e. *(.31)* that means individuals having intense fear of missing out expressed more phubbing behavior.

Table 2 indicates negative correlation between phubbing and relationship satisfaction. When correlation analysis was run through SPSS it confirmed the hypothetical statement that the association of the relationship between phubbing and relationship satisfaction is negative *(-.29)* that means as phubbing increases spouses reported less satisfaction towards their dyads. So findings indicate that, this hypothesis has been accepted at *alpha 0.01* levels.

Table 3 expresses prediction related above mentioned variables. Tolerance values of more than *.2* indicate that there is no multicollinearity, whereas errors are independent as Durbin Watson value is*1.36*. The model was found fit, *F (11,188) =7.36*which indicates that all variables (demographics and study variables) collectively significantly predict relationship satisfaction and explained *30%* of the variance in relationship satisfaction.Results drawn from the model 1 indicates that value of R^2 *(.17)* with *df1(9), df2 (190),* with variance of 4.46 alpha value is significant at $*p < .05$, $**p < .01$, $***p < .001$. model 2 represents fear of missing out as the predictor of relationship satisfaction where the value of R^2 *changeis .02* with variance of *4.58, df1 (1), df2 (189),* tolerance value is *.84* that indicates that there is no multicollinearity between FoMO and relationship satisfaction, *VIF(1.18),* that shows FoMO was a significant determinant of relationship satisfaction and significance level is $*p < .05$. Model 3 indicates phubbing as a predictor of relationship satisfaction. Results drawn by hierarchical regression analysis verified that phubbing was a very strong predictor of

relationship satisfaction as value of $R^2(.10)$, *df1 (1), df2 (188),* tolerance value *.78,* that indicates that there is no multicolliniearity among independent variables, *variance (7.36) VIF (1.28),alpha* value is significant at $*p < .05$, $**p < .01$, $***p< .001$.

Table 4 shows differences regarding joint and nuclear family system were observed by using independent sample *t-test.* Results drawn from the table 4 illustrates that people belongs to joint family are comparatively more satisfied as results are significant at *alpha .05* and *.01* level. While results drawn from phubbing scale indicate that family system does not matter in phubbing behavior as results arenot significant at partner phubbing scale. Whereas findings of FoMO explains the significance of family system in prevailing the feeling of missing out as results are significant at *.05*level. Results showed that people belong to nuclear families more experienced FoMO than participants living in joint families.

Table 5 shows gender differences in FoMO, Phubbing, and Relationship Satisfaction. Results indicates that there are significant gender differences at relationship satisfaction scale as men *(M=27.41, SD6.81)* and women *(M=25.32, SD=6.35) t=2.24(198) p= (.02) < .05* were significantly different on relationship satisfaction. That means men were more satisfied as compare to women. When these gender differences were examined on phubbing scale, it was found that men were more involved in phubbing behavior as compare to women as men *(M=27.27, SD=7.86)* and women *(M=22.81, SD=6.52) t=4.36(198), p=(.03) < .05* were significant. When gender differences were measured on FoMO scale, it was estimated that there were no gender differences seen at FoMO scale as men carried *(M=24.02, SD=8.36)* and women *(M=24.78, SD=7.34) t=-.68(198), p=(.49) >.05* were not significant.

Table 1

Descriptive and Reliability Analysis of FoMO, partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction among working spouses (N=200)

Variables	*K*	*A*	*M(SD)*	Min-Max Potential	Min-Max Actual	Skewness
FoMO	10	.84	24.40(7.58)	10-50	10-50	.51
Partner phubbing	9	.85	25.04(7.54)	9-45	9-45	.80
RAS	7	.84	26.36(6.65)	7-35	11-35	-.32

Note. FoMO= Fear of Missing Out; RAS=Relationship Assessment Scale, n= Sample size, M=Mean, SD= Standard Deviation, α= Cronbach Alpha Reliability, Skew= Skewness

Table 2

Summary of Inter Correlations, Means and Standard Deviation for Score (N = 200)

	Variables	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*	*9*	*10*	*11*	*12*	*13*
1.	Age	-.27**	.80**	-.21**	.28**	.41**	-.10	.09	.16**	.20**	-.14**	.05	.03
2.	Gender	-	-.13	.15*	-.25**	-.25**	-.21**	-.45**	.04	-.19**	.04	-.29**	-.15*
3.	Marital duration		-	-.30**	-.20**	.41**	-.16*	.01	.04	.16*	-.11	.00	-.04
4.	Qualification	-	-	-	.06	-.14*	-.15*	-.26**	.04	.16*	-.18**	-.18**	.22**
5.	Age at marriage	-	-	-	-	.01	.11	.15*	.14*	.03	-.01	.07	.08

6.	NO. ofdependents	-	-	-	-	-	-.03	.08	-.01	.01	-.01	-.04	-.12
7.	Time on social media	-	-	-	-	-	-	.17*	-.14*	-.09	.23**	.11	-.06
8.	Working hours	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-.04	.11	.24**	.25**	-.09
9.	Family system	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.01	-.16*	-.07	.21*
10.	Income	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.02	.06	.18**
11.	FoMO	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.31**	-.23**
12.	Phubbing	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-.29**
13.	Relationship Satisfaction	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

*NoteFoMO =fear of missing out *p < .05, **p < .01.*

Table 3

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting FoMO, Phubbing and Relationship Satisfaction among married working spouses.

Predictors of Relationship Satisfaction					
Predictors	ΔR^2	SE	B	B	F change
Step 1	17***				4.46
Age		.19	-.00	-.01	
Marital duration		.19	-.03	-.03	
Age at marriage		.22	-.01	-.00	
NO. of dependents		.29	-.67	-.17*	
Time on social media		.31	-.26	-.06	
Working hours		.24	-.63	-.19***	
Family system		.90	-2.6	-.19***	
Income		.00	4.3	.18**	
Step 2	.02*				4.92
FoMO		.60	-.13	.19*	

	.10***			28.41
Step 3				
		.06	-.32	-.36***
Phubbing				
	.30***			
Total R^2				
	7.36			
F				
	200			
N				

*Note: N= 200, β =the amount difference in y associated with a – unit difference in X, ΔR^2=R square change, FoMO =fear of missing out *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p< .001.*

Table 4
Family system differences regarding FoMO, Phubbing and relationship satisfaction (N=200)

Variable	*Joint* n=86		*Nuclear* n=114			*95%Cl*			
	M	S D	M	SD	t(df)	p	LL	UL	Cohen's d
Relationship Satisfaction	28.01	5.91	25.12	6.93	3.10(198)	.00	1.05	4.72	0.44
Phubbing	24.39	7.32	25.52	7.70	-1.04(198)	.29	-3.25	.99	-.15
FoMO	22.90	7.01	25.52	8.28	-2.36(198)	.01	-4.80	-.43	-.34

*Note. CI = Confidence Interval, LL= Lower Limit, UL = Upper Limit, FoMO = Fear of Missing Out, *p < .05, **p < .01.*

Table 5
Gender differences regarding FoMO, Phubbing and relationship satisfaction (N=200)

Variables	*Men* n=100		*Women* n=100			*95%Cl*			
	M	SD	M	SD	t(df)	p	LL	UL	Cohen's d
Relationship Satisfaction	27.41	6.81	25.32	6.35	2.24(198)	.02	.25	3.92	0.31
Phubbing	27.27	7.86	22.81	6.52	4.36(198)	.03	2.44	6.47	0.61
FoMO	24.02	8.36	24.78	7.34	-.683(198)	.49	-2.95	-.1.43	-0.09

*Note. CI = Confidence Interval, LL= Lower Limit, UL = Upper Limit, FoMO = Fear of Missing Out *p < .05.*

Discussion

The present study can be considered as ground breaking work in investigating the relationship among FoMO, phubbing and relationship satisfaction in Pakistan. The inquest has

specifically conducted to check the gross effect of FoMO and phubbing on relationship satisfaction among working spouses in Pakistani society.

Analysis drawn from the demographic information of the study elaborates that much time spent on social media plays an important role in provoking the FoMO.A number of studies have sorted out the same phenomenon that social media usage has brought forth an anxious feeling of being left out from the cyber world(Balta, Emirtekin,Kircaburun, & Griffiths, 2018;Elhai, Levine, Dvorak, & Hall, 2016). The findings are adjacent with the hierarchical theory of needs proposed by Abraham Maslow (Feist&Feist, 2008) and displacement hypothesis theory also fortified the research outcomes that people have switched their communication pattern from face to face meeting to web interactions (Coyne, Padilla-Walker, Fraser, Fellows, & Day, 2014).

The current study revealed that FoMO has linear relationship with Phubbingwhereas inverse relationship between phubbing and relationship satisfaction. Symbolic interaction theory presented by George Herbert Mead (1863-1931) supported the results of the current study that in phubbed individuals' feeling of 'alone together' develops as they suffer from feeling of loneliness even in the presence of intimate relationship which inturn increases relationship dissatisfaction. Politeness theory by Brown and Levinson (1987) also confirmed the findings that absence of non-verbal gestures indicate degrading attitude among communicators. Globally conducted researches have also concluded that phubbing behavior decreases the quality of marital satisfaction (Robert & David, 2016). Habuchi (2005) proved that phubbing produces tele-cocooning (intimate human computer interaction) effect which inversely causes dissatisfaction. Conclusively it can be said that phubbing behavior in spousal relationship produces lack of satisfaction in dyads also among Pakistani population irrespective of cultural variations.

Findings of the study indicate that FoMO and phubbing are the significant predictors of relationship dissatisfaction.Bulk of studies has identified that interference of smartphones in romantic relations reduces marital satisfaction and creates feeling of rejection and insult in partners which consequently cause relationship dissatisfaction (Ahlstrom et al. 2012;MureithI, 2015;Wang, Zhao & Lei, 2019).

Analysis of the study suggests that gender differences exist in the current sample as men were more involved in phubbing behavior as compared to women. In fact Pakistani society is basically patriarchic society while women are more responsible for their deeds. The findings of gender differences are also in line with the studies conducted by Chotpitayasunondh, Dougals (2016),Franchina, Abeel, Rooij, Coco, and Marez (2018).

Furthermore, it is observed through analysis of the study that family system (nuclear & joint) has an effect on FoMO, phubbing and relationship satisfaction. Pakistan is a collectivistic society where people tend to live in groups. They develop interdependent self and when they adopt nuclear system they may think that they have lost their identity. In such set up they develop more feelings of anxiousness and express FoMO regarding their belongings. Construal theory has also supported the findings that people having interdependent self would express more FoMO as compare to individuals who have independent self. Internationally conducted researches provided consistent and convergent findings (Dogan, 2019; Allumbaugh, 2001).

Conclusion

The current study has investigated the relationship among fear of missing out, phubbing and relationship satisfaction and extends preceding literature that how excessive usage of smart gadgets is haunting spousal intimacies in Pakistan also. This study confirms that FoMO and phubbing are the predictors of relationship dissatisfaction and men are more involve in phubbing behavior as compare to women that's why females show dissatisfaction, restlessness and irritability regarding their marital relations. The study also highlights the significance of family system that how this system causes recurrent thought of FoMO and repeated behavior of phubbing and produces dissatisfaction among dyads.

Limitations and Suggestions of the Study

- The sample size was small due to the dearth of time, it would be better to have adequate increase in the data for generalization and significance of further results.
- Generalizability of the findings is limited as sample consisted of working spouses only so it would better to include dyads from non-working settings also.
- Other factors of marital dissatisfaction as forced marriage, childlessness, absence of baby boy, hand to mouth daily living and lack of mental compatibility are also considerablecontributing factors. So for further investigation it would be better to inquire all these aspects to determine the major leading cause of marital dissatisfaction along with smart gadgets usage.
- The current study has only explored the impact of partner phubbing on one's marital satisfaction. But it did not investigate that phubbed or snubbed individuals generally react in the same way, producing a vicious circle which may harm their intimacies more grossly. So, further studies should be conducted to observe the other partner phubbing and its consequences on intimate relationship satisfaction.
- Literature has suggested that relationship dissatisfaction cause depression and other neurotic problems, further studies should be conducted to examine effects of dissatisfaction in Pakistani society.

Implication of the Study

The current study has provided the evidence based findings about excessive mobile usage and give us heart-wrenching facts that how smartphones are drastically affecting the quality of intimate relations. This study is an initial effort emphasizing on the importance of quality time is essential to strengthen relationships. This does not just end the yet this repeated behavior is causing neuroticism, psychological and behavioral issues. It is time to get alert and we should set limits in social networking.Studies around the world show modern devices are effecting all generations irrespective of age differences. The present research would be beneficial for the society at large to provide an insight regarding setting boundaries and consciously avoid social media in presence of intimate relationship just to secure beloved relations. This study is definitely a significant contribution which will fills the gap in this regard and it will help to identify factors affecting the quality of satisfactory relationships.

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