

**Phubbing Behaviour among Higher Education Students Across Urban and Rural Institutes****Dr. B. S. Gupta<sup>1</sup> & Dr. Shikha Tiwari<sup>2</sup>**DOI: <https://doi-ds.org/doilink/07.2025-35279596/ADEDJ/V2/I1/BSGST>*Review: 12/05/2025**Acceptance: 19/06/2025**Publication: 17/07/2025***Abstract:**

The Prevalence of Phubbing Behavior among higher education students, particularly in urban and rural institutes, underscores the need to understand its motivations, consequences, and socio-cultural influences. Phubbing, defined as the act of prioritizing smart phone engagement over immediate social interactions, poses challenges to interpersonal relationships and academic engagement. Through focus group discussions and quantitative analysis involving 243 participants, this study explores gender differences, institutional influences, and education levels regarding phubbing behaviour. Female participants emphasized the importance of staying connected through smart phones, while males highlighted entertainment as a primary motivation. Urban students felt pressured to stay online due to fear of missing out, contrasting with rural students' sporadic access to technology. Statistical analyses revealed no significant differences in phubbing behavior based on gender, institutional setting, or education level. These findings suggest the need for tailored interventions to promote digital mindfulness and healthy communication habits among higher education students. By understanding the complex interplay between technology, social norms, and individual motivations, educators can create inclusive environments conducive to academic success and positive social interactions. This research contributes to the ongoing dialogue surrounding smart phone usage and its impact on interpersonal dynamics within educational settings.

**Key Words:** Phubbing Behaviour, Higher Education, Smart Phone.etc**Introduction:**

In the contemporary digital era, the ubiquitous presence of smart phones has transformed the landscape of interpersonal communication, presenting both opportunities and challenges for individuals across various domains of life. Among the challenges posed by increased smart phone usage is the phenomenon known as "phubbing," a portmanteau of "phone" and "snubbing." Phubbing refers to the act of ignoring one's immediate surroundings or companions in favor of engaging with a mobile device, such as a smart phone or tablet.

While Phubbing behavior is prevalent across different age groups and social settings, its impact is particularly noteworthy among higher education students. As individuals navigating the transition to adulthood and academic pursuits, students in higher education are exposed to unique social, academic, and technological pressures that may influence their mobile phone usage patterns.

Understanding phubbing behavior among higher education students is essential not only due to its implications for interpersonal relationships but also for its potential effects on academic engagement and overall well-being. Moreover, examining phubbing behavior in the context of urban and rural higher education institutes can provide valuable insights into the intersection of technology, culture, and social dynamics in shaping mobile communication practices.

This study aims to investigate phubbing behavior among higher education students across urban and rural institutes, with a specific focus on exploring the prevalence, motivations, and consequences of phubbing within diverse socio-cultural contexts. By examining how phubbing manifests among students in different institutional settings, this research seeks to elucidate the underlying factors contributing to variations in mobile phone usage and interpersonal interactions.

The introduction of smart phones has revolutionized the way individuals communicate, access information, and engage with the world around them. However, the pervasive use of smart phones has also given rise to new social behaviors and etiquettes, with phubbing emerging as a prominent phenomenon in interpersonal interactions.

**Tamura et al., 2017.** Researched that excessive smart phone usage among higher education (HE) students has led to a rise in cases of problematic smart phone use (PHUB). There is increasing evidence that smart phone addiction (SMA) negatively affects Pakistani HE students' satisfaction with their classroom interactions. While smart phone addiction is a global issue not limited to Pakistan, few studies have explored the predictive factors for PHUB specifically in the HE context. Previous research suggests that risk factors for PHUB include addictive behaviors like SMA, fear of missing out (FoMO), feelings of loneliness (Gong et al., 2019), and tendencies toward social comparison (SCO; Chotpitayasunondh and Douglas, 2016; Blanca and Bendayan, 2018). Recognizing and understanding these factors is crucial for implementing effective preventive measures and interventions to reduce PHUB and

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problematic smart phone usage. Additionally, many studies have found that addictive behaviors, particularly smart phone addiction, are strong predictors of PHUB (Błachnio and Przepiorka, 2019; Balta et al., 2020). The detrimental impact of excessive smart phone use on interpersonal connections due to PHUB has also been emphasized by Salehan and Negahban (2013). Building on previous literature, this study endeavors to understand the complex interplay between technology, social norms, and interpersonal dynamics in higher education settings. The findings of this study may inform the development of strategies and interventions aimed at promoting digital mindfulness, fostering positive communication habits, and cultivating inclusive campus environments conducive to academic and social flourishing.

**Objectives:**

1. To study the Phubbing Behavior among students of Higher Education.
2. To study the Phubbing Behavior among Higher Education Students in the context of gender.
3. To study the Phubbing Behavior among Higher Education Students in the context of Education Levels.

**Research Hypothesis**

1. There is significant difference in the Phubbing Behavior between male and female students of Higher Education Levels.
2. There is significant difference in the Phubbing Behavior among B.Com, B.Ed., B.Sc. and B.A. Students of Higher Education Levels.

**Null Hypothesis**

1. There is no significant difference in the Phubbing Behavior between male and female students of Higher Education Levels.
2. There is no significant difference in the Phubbing Behavior among B.Com, B.Ed., B.Sc. and B.A. Students of Higher Education Levels.

**Methodology:**

A survey method under the Descriptive Research has used in the present study. A research tool (Google Form) was developed by the researcher to collect data on Phubbing Behavior, perceptions and demographics among 243 higher education students. Focus group discussions were conducted with male and female students from urban and rural institutes to explore qualitative insights into the underlying motivations, social norms, and experiences related to Phubbing Behavior. To make meaningful interpretations and draw conclusions, raw scores were reorganized, subjected to appropriate statistical analysis and summarized. In order to find out the significance of difference, t-test statistical techniques were used.

**Objectives:**

1. To study the Phubbing Behavior among students of Higher Education.

**Focus Group Discussion Data:****Theme: Gender Differences in Motivations for Phubbing Behavior**

**Participant 1 (Female, Urban Institute):** "I feel like sometimes we use our phones to avoid awkward situations or to fill in the gaps in conversations. It's not that I'm trying to ignore my friends intentionally, but sometimes it's just easier to check my phone than engage in small talk."

**Participant 2 (Male, Rural Institute):** "I think guys tend to use their phones more for entertainment, like gaming or watching videos. It's not necessarily about ignoring people, but we just get caught up in what's on our screens."

**Participant 3 (Female, Urban Institute):** "For me, it's about staying connected. I'm always checking my messages and social media to see what's going on with my friends. But I realize it can come off as rude sometimes, especially when we're supposed to be having face-to-face conversations."

**Analysis:**

The data from the focus group discussions reveal diverse motivations for Phubbing Behavior among male and female students across urban and rural institutes. Female participants often cited the use of smartphones as a means of staying connected and keeping up with social interactions. They acknowledged the potential for their behavior to be perceived as rude but emphasized the importance of maintaining social connections.

Male participants, on the other hand, highlighted the entertainment aspect of smartphone usage, such as gaming and watching videos, as a primary motivation for Phubbing Behavior. They tended to view phone usage as a distraction rather than a deliberate snub toward others.

These insights suggest that gender differences play a significant role in shaping the motivations behind Phubbing Behavior. While females may prioritize social connection and communication, males may lean more towards entertainment and distraction.

Understanding these gender-specific motivations can inform targeted interventions aimed at promoting digital mindfulness and enhancing interpersonal communication skills among higher education students on students.

#### **Theme: Institutional Influences on Phubbing Behavior**

**Participant 1 (Male, Urban Institute):** "In our urban institute, there's this constant pressure to stay connected and be online all the time. It's like everyone is always checking their phones, whether it's in class or during breaks. It's become almost like a norm."

**Participant 2 (Female, Rural Institute):** "At our rural institute, things are a bit different. We have limited access to high-speed internet, so we're not always glued to our phones. But when we do get a chance to go online, it's like we're making up for lost time. So, the intensity might be different, but the behavior is still there."

**Participant 3 (Male, Urban Institute):** "Yeah, I agree. In urban institutes, there's this sense of FOMO (fear of missing out) if you're not constantly checking your phone. It's like you might miss out on something important or be left behind socially."

#### **Analysis:**

The data highlight how institutional factors, such as access to technology and social norms, influence Phubbing Behavior among students in urban and rural institutes. In urban institutes where high-speed internet and smartphone usage are prevalent, there's a pervasive pressure to stay connected and engaged online, contributing to the normalization of Phubbing Behavior. Conversely, in rural institutes where access to technology may be limited, Phubbing Behavior may be less intense but still present, with students compensating for restricted online access when available.

#### **Objectives:**

##### **1. To study the Phubbing Behavior among Higher Education Students in the context of gender.**

The Independent Samples T-Test compares the means of two independent groups to determine if there is a statistically significant difference between them. In this analysis, the focus is on Phubbing Behavior among students, with data collected from 243 participants.

**Table 1:**

Mean, S.D. and t-ratio for Phubbing Behavior of male and female students of Higher Education Levels.

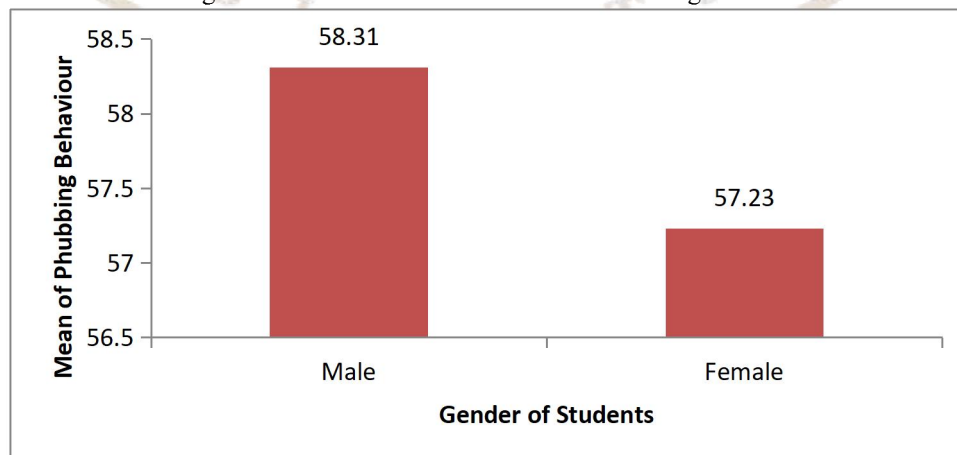
Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-ratio
Male	68	58.31	19.480	2.362	.427**
Female	175	57.23	16.815	1.271	

\*\*Insignificant at 0.05 level of significance

From Table 01, the calculated value of t-ratio .427 is lower than the table value of t-ratio at a .05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected at a .05 level of significance that 'There is no significant difference in the Phubbing Behavior between male and female students of Higher Education Levels.' and the research hypothesis is accepted that "There is significant difference in the Phubbing Behavior between male and female students of Higher Education Levels. Hence, there is a no significant difference in the Phubbing Behavior between male and female students of Higher Education Levels.

Figure 01

Mean of the Phubbing Behavior of male and female students of Higher Education Levels



It is observed from Table 01 that the mean of Phubbing Behavior of male students of Higher Education Levels is 58.31, which is higher than the mean Phubbing Behavior of female students of Higher Education Levels, which is 57.23. The existing difference in Phubbing Behavior between male and female students of Higher Education Levels is not significant at a .05 level of significance. So, it is stated that male students of Higher Education Levels having similar Phubbing Behavior with female students of Higher Education Levels. In summary, based on the Independent Samples T-Test results, we do not have any evidence to suggest that there is a significant difference in Phubbing Behavior between the two independent groups (male and female) of students.

**Objectives:**

1. To study the Phubbing Behavior among Higher Education Students in the context of Education Levels.

**Table 02**

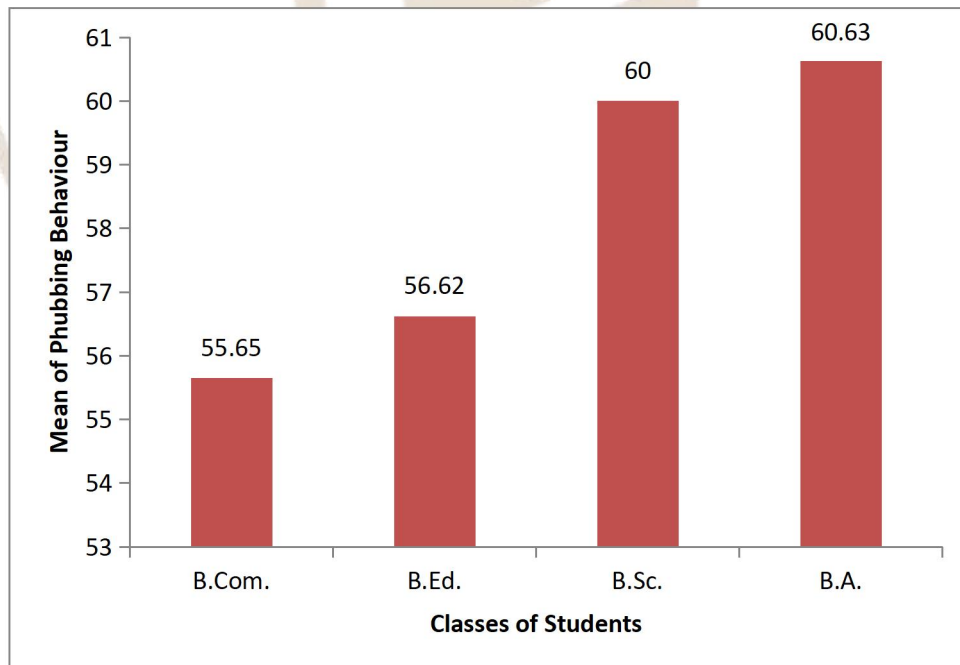
**Mean, S.D. and SE for Phubbing Behavior of B.Com, B.Ed., B.Sc. and B.A. Students of Higher Education Levels.**

Class	No	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
B.Com.	20	55.65	15.829	3.539
B.Ed.	158	56.62	17.190	1.368
B.Sc.	30	60.00	19.093	3.486
B.A.	35	60.63	18.964	3.206
Total	243	57.53	17.566	1.127

In this analysis, the focus is on Phubbing Behavior among students categorized by their classes, with data collected from a total of 243 participants. From the table 02, it can be seen that, the mean of Phubbing Behavior of B.Com, Students of Higher Education Level is 55.65, mean of Phubbing Behavior of B.Ed. Students of Higher Education Level is 56.62, mean of Phubbing Behavior of B.Sc. Students of Higher Education Level is 60.00 and mean of Phubbing Behavior of B.A. Students of Higher Education Levels is 60.63.

**Fig. 02**

Mean of the Phubbing Behavior among B.Com, B.Ed., B.Sc. and B.A. Students of Higher Education Levels



It is found that there is difference among the mean of Phubbing Behavior among B.Com, B.Ed., B.Sc. and B.A. Students of Higher Education Levels. So, the One-Way ANOVA (Welch's) test compares the means of above independent groups to determine if there is a statistically significant difference among them.



Table 03

ANOVA of There is no significant difference in the Phubbing Behavior among B.Com, B.Ed., B.Sc. and B.A. Students of Higher Education Levels.

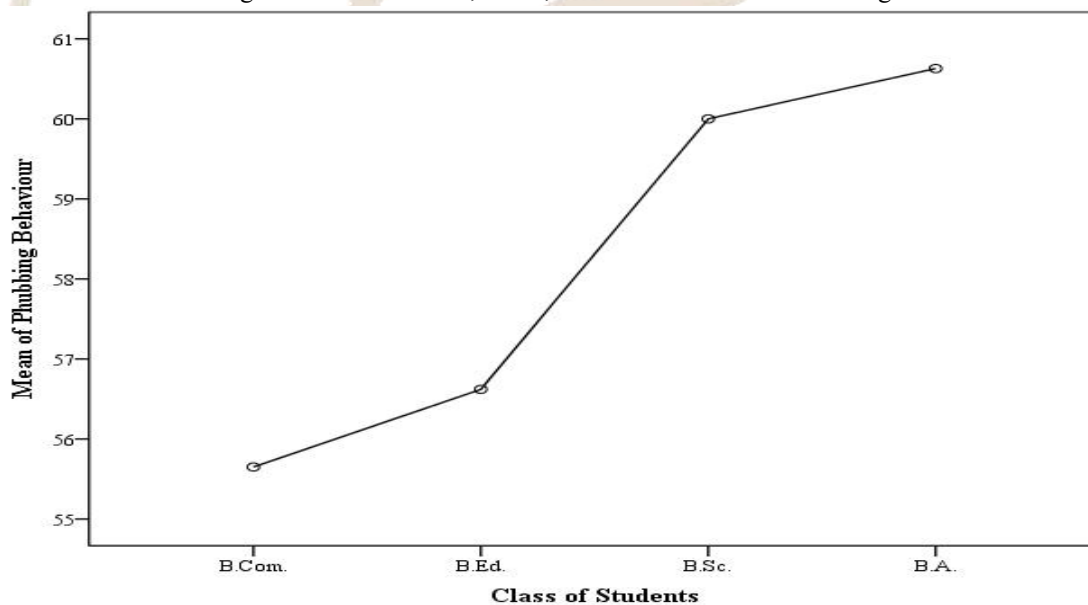
Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Between Groups	720.516	3	240.172	.776**
Within Groups	73955.937	239	309.439	
Total	74676.453	242		

\*\*Insignificant at 0.05 level of significance

From the results of the above table 03, it can be seen that, an insignificant difference was observed among the Phubbing Behavior among B.Com, B.Ed., B.Sc. and B.A. Students of Higher Education Levels  $F=776$  at .05 level of significant. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted that is 'There is no significant difference among the Phubbing Behavior among B.Com, B.Ed., B.Sc. and B.A. Students of Higher Education Levels, and alternative hypothesis is rejected that is 'There is significant difference among the Phubbing Behavior among B.Com, B.Ed., B.Sc. and B.A. Students of Higher Education Levels.' It means that, there is no significant difference among the Phubbing Behavior among B.Com, B.Ed., B.Sc. and B.A. Students of Higher Education Levels. The mean scores of the Phubbing Behavior among B.Com, B.Ed., B.Sc. and B.A. Students of Higher Education Levels are presented in the following graph.

**Graph 01**

Mean Plot of the Phubbing Behavior of B.Com, B.Ed., B.Sc. and B.A. Students of Higher Education Levels.



Based on the One-Way ANOVA (Welch's) results, we do not have evidence to suggest that there is a significant difference in Phubbing Behavior among students from different classes. Therefore, there is insufficient evidence to conclude that there is a statistically significant difference in Phubbing Behavior among students across different levels of education.

#### **Conclusion:**

The focus group discussions yielded valuable insights into the motivations and contextual influences driving Phubbing Behavior among higher education students across gender and institutional settings. Through the perspectives shared by participants, several key themes emerged, shedding light on the multifaceted nature of smartphone usage and its impact on interpersonal dynamics within educational environments.

#### **Gender Differences in Motivations for Phubbing Behavior:**

Female participants highlighted the role of smartphones in facilitating social connection and communication. They acknowledged the potential for Phubbing Behavior to be perceived as rude but emphasized the importance of staying connected with

friends and maintaining social interactions. In contrast, male participants tended to view smartphone usage as a source of entertainment and distraction, engaging in activities such as gaming and watching videos to pass the time. These gender-specific motivations underscore the diverse ways in which individuals engage with technology and prioritize different aspects of social interaction and leisure.

#### **Institutional Influences on Phubbing Behavior:**

Participants from urban institutes described a pervasive pressure to stay connected and engaged online, driven by the availability of high-speed internet and the fear of missing out on social interactions and events. Phubbing Behavior was normalized within urban environments, with students feeling compelled to constantly check their phones to stay updated and connected. Conversely, participants from rural institutes highlighted the challenges posed by limited access to technology, which influenced the intensity and frequency of Phubbing Behavior. Despite differences in access to resources, Phubbing Behavior remained prevalent across both urban and rural contexts, albeit with variations in intensity and social norms.

Overall, the findings reflect the importance of considering gender and institutional contexts when examining Phubbing Behavior among higher education students. Strategies aimed at promoting digital mindfulness and healthy communication habits should be tailored to address the unique motivations and challenges faced by students within diverse socio-cultural environments. By fostering awareness of Phubbing Behavior and its impact on interpersonal relationships, educational institutions can empower students to cultivate meaningful connections and engage in mindful technology use, ultimately enhancing their academic and social experiences within higher education settings.

The findings from the One-Way ANOVA (Welch's) test revealed a lack of statistically significant differences in Phubbing Behavior among students across various education levels. Despite the absence of significant differences, the exploration of Phubbing Behavior across education levels provides valuable insights into the digital dynamics within higher education environments.

While the research did not identify significant disparities in Phubbing Behavior based on education levels, several factors may contribute to the nuanced relationship between education and smartphone usage. Academic workload, technological proficiency, and social norms within educational contexts may influence students' tendencies towards Phubbing Behavior. Additionally, individual differences in smartphone usage habits and preferences may play a role in shaping students' interactions with digital devices.

The implications of the research findings extend beyond the scope of education levels, highlighting the importance of promoting digital mindfulness and healthy smartphone usage habits among higher education students. Educational interventions and strategies aimed at mitigating Phubbing Behavior and fostering a conducive learning environment should consider the multifaceted nature of digital distraction and its impact on student well-being.

In conclusion, while the current study did not uncover significant differences in Phubbing Behavior based on education levels among higher education students, the findings underscore the need for continued research and intervention efforts to address digital distraction within educational settings. By promoting responsible digital citizenship and cultivating a culture of mindful technology use, higher education institutions can empower students to navigate the digital landscape with intentionality and purpose, fostering meaningful interpersonal connections and supporting academic success.

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