

**PHUBBING BEHAVIOR AND SATISFACTION OF ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS IN  
EARLY ADULT DATING: A CORRELATIONAL STUDY**

***Perilaku Phubbing Dan Kepuasan Hubungan Romantis Pada Dewasa Awal Yang Sedang  
Berpacaran: Studi Korelasional***

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**ABSTRACT**

**Background:** Intimacy is essential in a dating relationship, but phubbing behavior can be hindrance which can ultimately interfere with romantic relationship satisfaction. Phubbing behavior is ignoring other people by playing on mobile phones. **Purpose:** This study aims to determine the relationship between phubbing behavior and romantic relationship satisfaction in early adulthood when dating. **Methods:** Used the quantitative correlational method. Determination of the sample using the incidental sampling method involved as many as 107 early adult respondents aged 18-40 years and currently undergoing a dating relationship for at least six months in all regions of Indonesia. The instruments in this study were the Relationship Assessment Scale to measure romantic relationship satisfaction and the Generic Scale of Phubbing to measure phubbing behavior. This study used the Spearman correlation test. **Results:** Showed that the correlation coefficient was -0.135 with a significance of 0.083 ( $p > 0.05$ ), meaning that phubbing behavior has no significant negative relationship with romantic relationship satisfaction in early adulthood dating. **Conclusion:** Phubbing behavior is not related to romantic relationship satisfaction. Most respondents have phubbing behavior and romantic relationship satisfaction at a moderate level.

**Keywords:** early adulthood, courtship, phubbing behavior, romantic relationship satisfaction

**ABSTRAK**

**Latar Belakang:** Keintiman diperlukan dalam hubungan, namun perilaku phubbing dapat menjadi penghalang yang akhirnya dapat mengganggu kepuasan hubungan romantis. Perilaku phubbing yaitu tindakan mengabaikan orang lain dengan cara bermain ponsel. **Tujuan:** Untuk mengetahui hubungan perilaku phubbing dengan kepuasan hubungan romantis pada dewasa awal yang sedang berpacaran. **Metode:** menggunakan metode kuantitatif korelasional. Penentuan sampel menggunakan metode sampling insidental dan melibatkan sebanyak 107 responden dewasa awal berusia 18-40 tahun dan sedang menjalani hubungan pacaran minimal 6 bulan di seluruh wilayah Indonesia. Instrumen dalam penelitian ini yaitu Relationship Assessment Scale untuk mengukur kepuasan hubungan romantis dan Generic Scale of Phubbing untuk mengukur perilaku phubbing. Penelitian ini menggunakan uji korelasi spearman. **Hasil:** Menunjukkan bahwa nilai koefisien korelasi sebesar -0,135 dengan signifikansi 0,083 ( $p > 0,05$ ), artinya perilaku phubbing tidak memiliki hubungan negatif signifikan dengan kepuasan hubungan romantis pada dewasa awal yang sedang berpacaran. **Kesimpulan:** Perilaku phubbing tidak berhubungan dengan kepuasan hubungan romantis. Mayoritas responden memiliki perilaku phubbing dan kepuasan hubungan romantis di tingkat sedang.

**Kata Kunci:** dewasa awal, kepuasan hubungan romantis, pacaran, perilaku phubbing.

## INTRODUCTION

According to Santrock (2011), emerging adulthood is the transition from adolescence to adulthood. This transition is in the form of a shift from dependence to individuals who are independent economically, have the freedom to determine themselves and have a more realistic view of the future (Renanda, 2018). Berk (2010) said that the age range of early adult individuals ranges from 18 to 40. Early adult individuals certainly have developmental tasks, one of which is to regulate intimacy.

Erikson (in Soetjipto & Soetjipto, 2010) argued that intimacy is a process of finding oneself and self-melting within others; when individuals fail to create intimate relationships in early adulthood, they will experience isolation. Through connections with people of the opposite sex, one can achieve individual attachment to a partner because dating involves more deep closeness than being in a committed relationship (Renanda, 2018)

Katz and Arias (in Sari, 2018) stated that dating is a bond between men and women who have an emotional connection with each other because of particular feelings. The process of further introduction will be involved in courtship; this is to consider the level of compatibility with each other before the couple proceeds to the next level which is marriage. Bird and Merville (in Kurniati, 2018), what couples have in common, the desire to maintain a relationship, a sense of mutual support, how often partners interact and physical closeness are factors that can maintain a romantic relationship. Communication can also influence relationship satisfaction (Eğeci & Gençöz, 2006).

Romantic relationship satisfaction, according to Hendrick (in Guzmán-González et al., 2023), refers to an individual's responsive assessment of the relationship.

Khaddouma et al. (2016) said when someone feels relationship satisfaction, that person will have better mental health, be ready to face the future and be ready to change their behaviour for the better for their partner.

Then, Hendrick (1988) stated that aspects of romantic relationship satisfaction are love which can be expressed through oral communication, problems caused by differences in the views of individuals and partners, and expectations, which are things that individuals and partners want to achieve. Romantic relationship satisfaction can be influenced by communication, attractiveness, compatibility, intimacy and affection, and forgiveness (Burke & Hogan, 2015). Communication is related to daily activities and supporting partners, attraction such as the feeling that appears when you first see your partner, compatibility related to the partner's background, intimacy and affection that can be realized with physical touch, and forgiveness if something goes wrong with your partner.

Study conducted by Till et al. (2017) revealed that the risk of suicide was found, mostly, in individuals who are single than in individuals who have happy relationships. However, the risk of suicide in these individuals is lower when compared to individuals who have low satisfaction. Respondents admitted that many conflicts, such as communication and disagreements about support and demands from partners, had not been resolved with partners, so respondents had suicidal ideation, hopelessness, and depression. Reporting to liputan6.com (2020), according to the 2017 Indonesian Demographic and Health Survey, 81% of young women and 84% of adolescents are already dating. The results of Utami's research (2022) showed that respondents expressed their love by talking about their activities, exchanging ideas, giving gifts, accompanying and helping their partner when doing assignments, dropping

off their partner, hugging, embracing, and complimenting their partner.

Communication in dating couples is vital for the quality of their relationship. Communication that is established can be done through various media, one of them is via a mobile phone (Ramaita et al., 2019). Based on a survey on a large scale in America, pewresearch.org., (2014) resulted that as many as 42% of mobile phone owners aged 18-29 years in a relationship, their partner is disturbed by mobile phones when they are together. According to Karadağ et al. (2015), phubbing is a condition in which individuals look at their mobile phones when they are with others, thus ignoring interpersonal communication. In line with Chotpitayasunondh and Douglas., (2018a), playing on mobile phones while communicating with others is a form of neglect called phubbing. As a result, it can interfere with individual conversations with someone, especially with the rapid spread of mobile phones, making phubbing incidents inevitable (Roberts & David, 2016).

The aspects of phubbing are nomophobia, interpersonal conflict, problem acknowledgment, and self-isolation (Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas, 2018b). Phubbing can be influenced by smartphone addiction, internet addiction, SMS addiction, FoMO and social media addiction (Karadağ et al., 2015; Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas, 2016). According to slicktext.com, (2023) as many as 22% of individuals aged 18-29 years often check their mobile phones. Therecoveryvillage.com (2023) stated that 6% of internet users around the world are addicted to the internet. Meanwhile, trustpulse.com, (2023) written that 69% of individuals' experience FoMO. Quoted from crossrivertherapy.com (2023), approximately 70% of adolescents and early adults in America are addicted to social media. Phubbing behavior can be considered by using a mobile phone when meeting other

people, ignoring the other person, and preferring the virtual environment compared to real life (Karadağ dkk., 2015).

One of the behaviors that can arise from communication is phubbing (Garrido et al., 2021). This behavior causes a lack of communication with partners because they feel ignored or unimportant because phubbing perpetrators or called phubbers are more concerned with mobile phones than conversations with partners, lack of communication so that partners feel ignored can affect romantic relationship satisfaction in couples who are in a dating relationship (Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas, 2018a). This study is in line with research conducted by Tokunaga (2011) which examined that the feeling of being ignored can also increase anxiety in partners.

The results of research from Roberts and David (2016), phubbing in couples can cause conflict which will affect relationship satisfaction and even one's life satisfaction which has an impact on individual depression. When people use their mobile phones when their spouses are around, it can affect how happy the partners are in their relationships. It means that it may have an effect on the partners' wellbeing. Other studies suggested that phubbing can lead to lower romantic relationship satisfaction (Kelly dkk., 2017). The results of other studies are different, as was conducted by Novitasari et al., (2021) that there is a positive relationship between phubbing and relationship satisfaction. The higher the phubbing behavior, the higher the relationship satisfaction. The results of another study carried out by Cizmeci (2017) showed that phubbing does not have a low impact on romantic relationship satisfaction.

As a result of this phenomenon and the sophisticated development of communication tools, mobile phones have become an indispensable part of daily

activities like online classes or meetings and working from home. This makes the use of mobile phones unavoidable when communicating with people around, including with a partner. Hence, researchers conducted this study to see the relationship between phubbing behavior and romantic relationship satisfaction in early adulthood who are dating.

There is still a lack of study conducted in Indonesia when it comes to publications on the relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships and other aspects of phubbing behavior. In a study conducted by Utami et al., (2022), the research population was residents in Malang City, the variables used were partner phubbing and romantic relationship satisfaction. Another study which was in line Novitasari et al., (2021) at Bhayangkara University, Jakarta Raya with student subjects. Jannatuna'im and Fikrie., (2022) conducted a study with the variables of marital satisfaction and phubbing behavior. Meanwhile, the researchers in this study conducted research with variables of phubbing behavior and romantic relationship satisfaction in early adult respondents aged 18-40 years and currently undergoing a dating relationship for at least six months spread throughout Indonesia.

## METHOD

The correlational quantitative method was used in this study. It aimed to determine the relationship between phubbing behavior and romantic relationship satisfaction in dating early adulthood and involved 107 moderate early adult participants. Research instruments were distributed throughout Indonesia online using a Google form and carried out on 16-24 February 2023. The form also included informed consent or someone's approval to undergo the research process. This research was approved by the Faculty of Psychology at Universitas Kristen

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The sampling technique used in this research was incidental sampling. The respondents may be utilized as a sample if it is determined that they were suitable as a data source. Early adult participants in this study had to be between 18-40 years and have been dating for at least six months. The data in this study were accumulated using a questionnaire with a Google form which was then distributed online using social media such as Instagram and WhatsApp. The instrument used in this research was Hendrick's Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS), (1988) to measure romantic relationship satisfaction, then the instrument used to measure phubbing behavior was Chotpitayasunondh and Douglas's Generic Scale of Phubbing (GSP), (2018b).

The romantic relationship satisfaction scale consisted of 7 items while the phubbing behavior scale consisted of 15 items. Then, an item selection test was performed on both scales to determine the reliability of the scale and the discriminatory power of each item. The result was that on the Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS). There was one item that was dropped with an item correlation of -0.490 and a Cronbach Alpha value of 0.856. On the Generic Scale of Phubbing (GSP) scale, two items were dropped with item correlations of 0.254 and 0.012 and an Alpha Cronbach score of 0.851. This study used the Spearman-rho method to analyze data and was assisted by using the IBM SPSS 22 program. In this study, normality and linearity tests were also carried out with the following results.

**Table 1.** Normality Test.

Variable	K-S-Z	Sig	Description
Phubbing behavior	0.068	0.200	Normal
Romantic Relationship Satisfaction	0.145	0.000	Abnormal

Source: Primer Data



After the normality test was applied, the results showed that the phubbing behavior scale obtained a K-S-Z value of 0.068, p of 0.200 with  $p > 0,05$ . While the romantic relationship satisfaction scale obtained a K-S-Z value of 0.145, p of 0.000 with  $p < 0.05$ . Thus, it can be interpreted that the phubbing behavior variable data is normally distributed, and the romantic relationship satisfaction variable data is abnormally distributed.

**Table 2.** Linearity Test.

Deviation from Linearity	F	Sig	Notes
	1.127	0.332	Linear

Source: Primary Data

Based on the table of linearity test results (Table 4), it was found that the significance value of the deviation from linearity was 0.332  $p > 0.05$ . Thus, these data can be interpreted that the two variables have a linear relationship.

## RESULT

The aim of the study was to determine the relationship between phubbing behavior and romantic relationship satisfaction in dating early adulthood. After analyzing the data, the results showed as follows.

**Table 3.** Participant Demographic Table Data.

		Number of Participants	Percentage
Sex	Female	86	80%
	Male	21	20%
<b>Total</b>		<b>107</b>	<b>100%</b>
Age	18-20 yr.	14	13%
	21-23 yr.	80	75%
	24-26 yr.	11	10%
	27-29 yr.	1	1%
	30-32 yr.	1	1%
<b>Total</b>		<b>107</b>	<b>100%</b>
Place of Origin	Java	80	75%
	Outside Java	27	25%
<b>Total</b>		<b>107</b>	<b>100%</b>
Period of Dating	0.5 – 1 year	43	40%
	1.5 – 2 years	19	18%
	2.5 – 3 years	13	12%
	3.5 – 4 years	13	12%
	4.5 – 5 years	9	8%
	> 5 years	10	9%
<b>Total</b>		<b>107</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Primary Data

This research was conducted on 107 respondents from Java Island, 80 respondents (80%) and outside Java Island, 27 respondents (20%). Commonly, data which was grouped was used to interpret. The phubbing behavior of the respondents showed that 17 respondents were in the low category (16%), 73 respondents were in the medium category (68%), and 17 respondents were in the high category (16%). Regarding romantic relationship satisfaction, the respondents showed that 19 respondents were in the low category (18%), 66 respondents were in the medium category (62%), and 22 respondents were in the high category (21%). Hence, it can be concluded that the phubbing behavior and romantic relationship satisfaction of the respondents were in the medium category. This means that due to phubbing behavior, 73 respondents (68%) felt communication disturbances and a high urge to use a mobile phone. In romantic relationship satisfaction, 73 respondents (62%) felt quite capable of discussing and listening to their partners, respondents also felt connectedness and compatibility with their partners. In addition, respondents also had a fairly good ability to forgive.

**Table 4.** Classification of Phubbing Behaviour and Romantic Relationship Satisfaction.

Variable	Interval	Category	Number of Participants	Percentage
Phubbing behavior	39 - 52	High	17	16%
	25 - 38	Moderate	73	68%
	11 - 24	Poor	17	16%
		<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>100%</b>
Romantic Relationship Satisfaction	29 - 37	High	22	21%
	21 - 28	Moderate	66	62%
	12 - 20	Poor	19	18%
		<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Primary Data

Classification in both variables was used to interpret in general. Based on Table 4, most respondents were in the medium category with 73 respondents (68%) for the phubbing behavior variable and 66 respondents (62%) for the romantic relationship satisfaction variable.

**Table 5.** The Correlation Test of Spearman's Rho.

Variable	r	Sig.	Notes
Phubbing behavior – romantic relationship satisfaction	-0.135	0.083	rejected

Source: Primary Data

The results of the correlation test (Table 5) showed that the correlation coefficient value was  $r=-0.135$ , a significance value of 0.083 with  $p>0.05$ . Thus, it can be concluded that there was no significant negative correlation between phubbing behavior and romantic relationship satisfaction. This means that phubbing behavior was unrelated to romantic relationship satisfaction in early adulthood in dating.

## DISCUSSION

Based on the research conducted, it was discovered that phubbing behavior did not have a significant negative correlation with romantic relationship satisfaction in early adulthood when dating. This was shown from the significance value in this study of 0.083 ( $p>0.05$ ) that the conclusion was the correlation coefficient of phubbing behavior has not been tested to be significant with romantic relationship satisfaction in early adulthood who were dating.

The results of this study were in line with research conducted Cizmeci (2017) that phubbing behavior does not have a low impact on individual romantic relationship satisfaction because phubbing behavior was normal and acceptable in social life, so individuals continue to feel satisfaction in the relationship they were in. The use of mobile phones is inevitable since it supports daily activities such as meetings, online classes, webinars, and communicating remotely.

According to Hall et al., (2014), phubbing behavior is an unavoidable

behavior. In addition, partners who have phubbing behavior are also not significantly related to romantic relationship satisfaction (Wang et al., 2021). This research only focuses on phubbing behavior so that there are other factors that can influence romantic relationship satisfaction such as the big five model personality (Gerlach et al., 2018), loneliness and empathy (Zhan, Shrestha, & Zhong, 2022), as well as the influence of the family when they were young. individual adolescents (Xia et al., 2018). Based on Gerlach et al., (2018), neurotic personality can lead to low relationship satisfaction, friendly and cautious personality is in line with relationship satisfaction, extraversion personality shows inconsistent results, then open personality is not related to relationship satisfaction. Zhan et al., (2022) stated that loneliness has a role as a mediator between romantic relationship satisfaction and phubbing behavior. Family influences during adolescence also play a major role in relationship satisfaction when the individual is growing up. Early adulthood individuals whose adolescents have a positive family climate and good parenting will have good problem-solving skills and a low risk of relationship violence, then adolescents who are more assertive and have positive bonds with their families have intimacy, love, and connection in their adult relationships (Xia et al., 2018).

This study has a drawback since the sampling method used is non-probability sampling, so the results of this study cannot generalize the results of the study. In addition, the distribution of the scale in this study uses the Google form. Therefore, it is possible if an error occurs that the researcher cannot recognize.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the results of data analysis from the study, it was concluded that there was no significant negative correlation between phubbing behavior and romantic relationship satisfaction in early adulthood dating. Most respondents in this study had phubbing behavior and romantic relationship satisfaction at moderate levels. These results indicate that individuals in this study have hesitation to let go of their cell phones, feel conflict with themselves or others, avoid social activities, recognition of phubbing constraints at a moderate level. Participants also can discuss activities, compatibility, intimacy, attractiveness, and good ability to forgive.

The suggestion of this research is that early adults who are dating should be able to avoid phubbing behavior when together with a partner so that partners can also avoid the effects caused by phubbing behavior. Future research would be able to develop this research by using the probability sampling method so that it can generalize the study population more and examine other factors to see the relationship between these factors and romantic relationship satisfaction.

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## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

Author Kirey Febriani Ajooba oversees data collection, data analysis, article writing and literature. Author Krismi Diah

Ambarwati oversees monitoring and analyzing data, as well as revising manuscripts.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author has no conflict of interest.

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