

Modern Love: A quantitative study to determine the correlation between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction in South African marriages.

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Declaration:

I hereby declare that the Research Report submitted for the BA Honours in Psychology degree to The Independent Institute of Education is my own work and has not previously been submitted to another University or Higher Education Institution for degree purposes.

Abstract

The increase of smartphone users worldwide has created a new phenomenon in society known as partner phubbing. Partner phubbing refers to the behaviour of ignoring one's spouse during a face-to-face interaction to attend to one's smartphone. It was found that studies in South Africa regarding partner phubbing and its impact on relationship satisfaction are limited. This study addressed this gap in existing literature by determining the correlation between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction in South African marriages. A quantitative design was used in order to study the variables of partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction in South African marriages. 40 married participants completed an online survey which measured these two variables. Results indicated that partner phubbing negatively correlated with relationship satisfaction in South African marriages. The results from this study emphasises the importance of partner phubbing as a phenomenon in South African marriages which warrants further investigation.

Keywords: partner phubbing, relationship satisfaction, marriage, South Africa

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Contextualisation

Smartphones are said to be essential in keeping relational partners connected (Miller-Ott, Kelly & Duran, 2012). However, 82% of smartphone users report that when a person uses their smartphone during a face-to-face conversation, it harms that conversation (Eisenhauer, 2018). Grace (2018) posits that smartphones impact every aspect of daily life. However, most importantly, they change the way humans communicate with each other, which in turn impacts intimate relationships (Grace, 2018). Two people dining together in a restaurant, each staring at the screen of a smartphone, neither looking at each other, has become a common scenario in today's society (Hall, Baym & Miltner, 2015). This behaviour has resulted in a field of research into the effect of smartphones on interpersonal and romantic relationships (Oliveira, 2016).

Research suggests that smartphones have created a new phenomenon in the 21st century, known as partner phubbing (Nazir, 2017). Roberts and David (2016) developed the term partner phubbing to explain the behaviour of ignoring one's spouse or partner during a face-to-face conversation to attend to one's smartphone. Partner phubbing is, in essence, less concerned with what a person is doing on their phone and more concerned with what they are not doing with their spouse (Nazir, 2017). Roberts and David (2016) maintain that partner phubbing has become a common occurrence in society and therefore suggest that it should be at the forefront of any study regarding smartphone use and romantic relationships.

Rationale

The relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction has resulted in several international studies (Cizmeci, 2017; Przybylski & Weinstein, 2013; Roberts & David, 2016; Wang, Zhao & Lei, 2019). However, the findings from these international studies have been inconsistent. Wang et al. (2019) postulate that the difference in results can be attributed to the influence of the participants marital status. Taking into account the recommendations and concerns stated by researchers Wang et al. (2019), this study acknowledged the possibility that married and unmarried participants may experience

different levels of partner phubbing. Therefore, this study focused its research solely on married South African participants.

In South Africa, statistics show that smartphone users have increased dramatically over the last few years, with smartphones penetrating 80% of the local mobile market (Gilbert, 2019). However, a review of previous studies done within South Africa found that research examining the social and relational implications of smartphones in face-to-face interactions is limited. Furthermore, it was discovered that studies which focus specifically on partner phubbing in South Africa are limited, with the majority of research undertaken internationally (Eisenhauer, 2018; Nazir, 2017; Oliveira, 2016; Roberts & David, 2016). Therefore, this study aimed to quantitatively determine the correlation between partner phubbing and the relationship satisfaction in South African marriages, thereby adding to the existing body of knowledge in South Africa.

Problem Statement

Research conducted by McCormack (2015), McDaniel and Coyne (2016) and Roberts and David (2016) amongst others, resulted in phubbing behaviour gaining recognition internationally. A perusal of existing literature regarding partner phubbing revealed that the correlation between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction is yet to be studied in South Africa. Therefore, this study proposed to address the gap identified in existing literature with a study focused on South African marriages.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine the correlation between partner phubbing and the relationship satisfaction in South African marriages.

Research Question

Is there a relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction in South African marriages?

Research Objective

The objective of this study was to identify whether a correlation exists between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction in South African marriages.

Hypotheses

It is hypothesised that there is a negative correlation between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction in South African marriages.

$$H_0: p = 0$$

$$H_1: p < 0$$

The level of significance was set at 5 %.

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

The Expectation Violation Theory (EVT) was developed by Jadee K. Burgoon in 1978 to understand a person's reactions to the expectation violations of non-verbal behaviour. Recently, scholars have begun to apply EVT in order to understand the effect of communication in interpersonal behaviour (Kelly, Miller-Ott and Duran, 2017). The two key concepts of EVT, expectation and valence, were used in this study to provide a further understanding of the phenomenon partner phubbing and its correlation to relational satisfaction.

Expectation. Burgoon explains expectancies as "an enduring pattern of anticipated behaviour" specific to a particular person or relationship (Burgoon, 1993, p 31). An expectancy violation occurs when an individual's expectation of an anticipated behaviour in a relationship is violated by their partner's behaviour because the behaviour is not what they were anticipating. (Burgoon, 1993). A violation of an individual's expectations consequently leads to more awareness of that violating behaviour (Burgoon & Walther, 1990). White (2015) found that people develop expectations regarding the communication behaviour of others, either in what is expected to occur or in what is hoped will occur.

"Expectancies regarding the depth of conversation, amount of affection and conversational involvement appear to be central to relationship satisfaction in marriage" (Kelley & Burgoon, 1991, p. 5). In applying the concepts of Expectation Violation Theory to a face-to-face scenario, researchers discovered that there is an expectation of undivided attention during face-to-face interactions (Miller-Ott & Kelly, 2016).

However, there are also expectations to be continually available via a smartphone which may hamper a person's ability to be attentive and conversationally involved during a face-to-face interaction (Johnson, Kaiser & Swan, 2019). According to Johnson et al. (2019), the act of partner phubbing during face-to-face interactions with a spouse could be perceived as violating the expectation of undivided attention. If this behaviour is ongoing and frequent, it could negatively affect the relationship satisfaction experienced within the marriage (Johnson et al., 2019).

Valence. According to Burgoon (1993) valence refers to whether a person's unexpected behaviour is considered to be positive or negative. Valence is usually determined by how far the unexpected behaviour deviates from what was expected (Kelly et al., 2017). Furthermore, valence refers to the effect a person's behaviour has on the relationship of the people interacting (Johnson et al., 2019). Given that attentive behaviour is expected during a face-to-face conversation, numerous studies show that the act of partner phubbing is a behaviour that is usually seen in a negative light and therefore, is negatively valenced (Johnson et al., 2019). Researchers found that negatively valenced behaviour can have a detrimental effect on relationships (Eisenhauer, 2018; Johnson et al., 2019; McDaniel & Drouin, 2019 and Miller-Ott & Kelly, 2016).

The Expectation Violation Theory provided a framework for this study with which to examine partner phubbing and its correlation with relationship satisfaction in South African marriages. The concepts of expectation and valence, which are central to the Expectation Violation Theory provided a unique perspective through which the scientific findings of this study could be interpreted and explained.

Review of Past Literature

Smartphones in South Africa. Smartphones in South Africa are considered to be the number one choice of mobile phone in South Africa according to market research (Rajgopaul, 2019). Furthermore, in a marketing survey, South African smartphone users' revealed that they could not live without their smartphone, they would never leave home without their phone, they take their phone to bed with them, and they check their smartphone first thing in the morning (Rajgopaul, 2019). The results of this marketing survey and other marketing research indicate that smartphones have become embedded in the everyday lives of South Africans (Rajgopaul, 2019).

Oliveira (2016) agrees that smartphones with their increased functionality have impacted multiple areas of an individual's life. Al-Saggaf and O'Donnell (2019) state that it has become a common occurrence to observe people engaging with their smartphones during a conversation with another person. As a result, the impact of smartphones on face-to-face interactions has caught the interest of researchers across the globe (Johnson et al., 2019).

However, smartphone research in South Africa has focused primarily on the economic and technological benefits of smartphones; smartphones assistance in areas of growth and development and the use of smartphones within the field of health and education (Chuma, 2014). A review of current literature found that there is limited research examining the social and relational implications of smartphones on relationships in South Africa.

Smartphones in relationships. Research shows that smartphones affect people's relationships, they affect how "people interact when face-to-face or rather, face-to-face-to-mobile-phone-to-face since people are forever likely to include the mobile phone as a participant in what would otherwise be a face-to-face dyad" (Katz & Aakhus, 2002, p.2).

Nazir (2017) deduced that since the arrival of smartphones, the world has become more connected while people have become more disconnected. In their study, Krasnova, Abramova, Notter and Baumann (2016) confirm that smartphones cultivate feelings of disconnect. They found that a person feels ignored, left out or disrespected during a face-to-face interaction on account of the other person being distracted by his or her smartphone (Krasnova et al., 2016).

Furthermore, seminal contributions by Przybylski and Weinstein (2013) found that when a cellular phone was present during face-to-face interactions, participants described their conversations with others to be less satisfying and lacking in connection. However, the device used in this study was a standard cellular phone and not a smartphone (Przybylski & Weinstein, 2013). Research suggests that a smartphone is a device that encompasses so much more than a standard cell phone, and therefore, it has a broader impact on dyadic interactions (Eisenhauer, 2018). Therefore, the current study focussed its research on smartphones and the role they play with regards to partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction.

Smartphones in Romantic Relationships. Leggett and Rossouw (2015, p.49) asked the question “if presence is not maintained due to technological distraction, how long can couples remain satisfied in their relationships without feeling heard or connected? Previous studies have empirically proven that smartphones are creating a barrier to connection and therefore having a negative effect on the relationship satisfaction of romantic couples (McDaniel & Coyne, 2016).

Przybylski and Weinstein (2013) found that the presence of a smartphone while engaging with a romantic partner face-to-face, inhibits trust and feelings of closeness as well as reducing understanding and empathy. McDaniel and Coyne (2016) postulate that when an individual allows technology, such as replying to a message, to intrude in their conversation with their partner, it sends a message that the partner is not a priority at that moment. These research results strongly suggest that the devices meant to enhance relationship communication and connection could simultaneously impede the face-to-face experience of intimacy and interpersonal interaction.

Smartphones play an essential role in keeping relational partners connected (Miller-Ott, et al., 2012). However, the constant connectivity a smartphone provides places users in a position that requires them to meet the demands of being present in a face-to-face interaction while simultaneously being contactable by others who are not present (Eisenhauer, 2018).

In providing constant connection, smartphones create a challenge for users to disengage from the outside world in order to cultivate meaningful relationships (McDaniel & Coyne, 2016). If an intimate moment is disrupted by a partner attending to a WhatsApp message, an email or call the message that is being sent is " My phone is more important than

you right now", or the behaviour is interpreted as "You are not worthy of my attention as this moment" (McDaniel & Coyne, 2016). In their study, Roberts and David (2016) found attention to be an essential factor for the development of intimacy in a relationship. However, the use of a smartphone during face-to-face interactions diverts attention, thereby hindering the development of intimacy (Roberts & David, 2016).

Partner Phubbing and Relationship Satisfaction in Marriages. Prior research provides a body of knowledge regarding the intrusive nature of mobile phones in the face-to-face interactions of romantic couples (Krasnova et al., 2016; McDaniel & Coyne, 2016; Przybylski & Weinstein, 2013). Furthermore, literature shows that partner phubbing specifically, has been the centre of many international studies (Cizmeci, 2017; Roberts & David, 2016).

In recent studies, several researchers have examined the impact of partner phubbing on variables such as relationship satisfaction. Researchers McDaniel and Coyne (2016), found that 70% of participants in their study reported feeling a lower level of relationship satisfaction when they experienced high levels of partner phubbing by their partners. Furthermore, research findings from two additional studies found partner phubbing to be negatively correlated to relationship satisfaction (Halpern & Katz, 2017; Roberts & David, 2016).

Cizmeci (2017), noticed that the participants in these studies (Halpern & Katz, 2017; McDaniel & Coyne, 2016; Roberts & David, 2016) were all women. Cizmeci (2017), addressed this limitation by including both men and women, married and unmarried in his study. However, the results from Cizmeci's (2017) study, revealed that partner phubbing did not correlate to relationship satisfaction, thereby contradicting prior research findings. Wang et al. (2019) speculated that marital status could account for the inconsistency in the research findings from Cizmeci's (2017) study as the study included both married and unmarried adult participants.

Wang et al. (2019) postulate that research which neglects the role of marital status is problematic as it should not be assumed that married adults and unmarried adults in a romantic relationship will experience the same level of partner phubbing. Wang et al.'s (2019) research findings support this belief, confirming that the adverse effect of partner

phubbing on relationship satisfaction only existed amongst the married adults in their sample and not amongst the unmarried adults. In their research, Przybylski & Weinstein (2013) discovered that the presence of a mobile phone negatively affects the face-to-face interactions of participants. However, the participants in Przybylski and Weinstein's (2013) study were strangers meeting for the first time. Therefore, no data was collected regarding the impact of a smartphone on an established interpersonal relationship such as marriage.

In light of the limitations and contradicting results discovered by perusing existing literature regarding partner phubbing, the current study proposed to address these shortcomings and the potential moderating effect of marital status by focusing solely on married individuals.

Methodology

Paradigm

A positivistic paradigm was chosen by the researcher to guide this research study. Mertens (2007) explains that paradigms are the organising principles that guide how knowledge is to be studied and interpreted. Positivists believe that social reality is known and consists of facts which can be empirically proven (Sukamolson, 2007). Ontologically they argue that reality is the same for each person and only through observation and measurement are we able to determine what that reality is (Venkatesh, Thong & Xu, 2012). According to Venkatesh et al. (2012) that once measured, there can only be one defined reality for the variables of this correlational study. In line with the ontological approach of positivism, this study observed and measured the variables of partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction in order to determine their correlation.

Positivists hold the epistemological view that knowledge is only valid if it is based on verifiable evidence (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). Furthermore, only phenomena capable of scientific observation and measurement can produce credible and meaningful data (Crotty, 1998). Correlational analysis was the objective measure used for this study as positivists believe that knowledge, discovered through the use of objective methods, is the only way to learn about the truth (Morris, 2006).

De Vos, Delpont, Fouché and Strydom (2011) emphasise that within the positivist paradigm research must be objective and value-free. The researcher assumes the role of objective analyst, dissociated from personal values and bias (De Vos et al., 2011). Positivists need to be able to trust the findings of a research study, to do so, an objective reality must be maintained (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). In this study, the researcher ensured objectivity by quantitatively measuring the variables partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction as they occur naturally without interference of any kind.

From a metatheoretical position, positivists emphasise objective research where theories are tested using hypotheses (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). Payne (2014) defines a hypothesis as an assumption based on a theory regarding the relationship between two variables. Mertler (2014) explains that correlational analysis is a quantitative tool used to accept or reject a hypothesis. Once a hypothesis is determined to be valid and reliable, the theory regarding the relationship of the variables can be verified, and future predictions can be made (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). In line with this positivistic position, the researcher was able to determine whether to accept or reject the null hypothesis through objective data collection and statistical analysis of findings.

Research Design

This study aimed to determine the relationship between the variables of partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction in South African marriages; this was achieved through a correlational analysis of these variables. Correlational analysis is a quantitative tool which is used to determine relationships between variables (Ivankova, Creswell & Plano Clark, 2020). Anderson, Anderson and Arsenault (1998) posit that correlational analysis aligns with the epistemological stance of positivism in that it provides findings which can be observed and measured objectively. As the paradigm underpinning this study was positivism, a quantitative research design was adopted for this research study.

The current study was non-experimental in design as the variables of partner phubbing, and relationship satisfaction were not altered or manipulated by the researcher but measured as they occur naturally in society (Maree & Pietersen, 2020). Maree and Pietersen (2020) posit that correlational studies are generally used when it is unethical or impossible to research variables using an experimental design. According to Maree and Pietersen (2020),

correlational studies are a non- experimental approach that falls within the positivistic paradigm.

This study required data to be obtained only once from participants and at one point in time; therefore, a cross-sectional timeframe was used (du Plooy-Cilliers & Cronje, 2014). The cross-sectional design of the study enabled the researcher to gather data involving partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction from participants as they experienced it at that specific point in time.

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction. Therefore, it did not seek to establish a causal connection but rather a correlational one (Levin, 2016). Levin (2016) states that correlational research is descriptive as it seeks to describe the relationship between two variables, which are outside of the researcher's influence. This research study was considered to be a descriptive study as it focused on determining the correlation between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction in married South Africans without focussing on why this relationship occurs.

In quantitative research, the intent is usually to test theories and assumptions deductively, searching for evidence to either support or refute the hypothesis (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). The Expectation Violation Theory, along with a comprehensive literature review, was used to develop the hypotheses of the study. After which, objective data collection methods and statistical data analysis provided evidence to accept or reject the null hypothesis of the study. Research is considered deductive when the hypothesis is developed, and a research strategy is designed to test this hypothesis (Dhanavandan & Tamizhchelvan, 2013). Therefore, this study's approach to research was deductive.

Population

Although all married South African couples were the target population for the study, research focused on married South African couples who reside in Durban as this was the population accessible to the researcher.

Only individuals who were married, South African and currently residing in Durban were able to participate in this study. Due to the criteria mentioned above, age was not

considered a criterion for this study as the minimum legal age for marriage in South Africa is 18. The study focused on the smartphone as the device predominantly used in partner phubbing. Therefore an additional inclusion factor for participation in this study required both spouses in the marriage to own and use a smartphone.

Studies by Cizmeci (2017), Eisenhauer (2018) Oliveira (2016), show partner phubbing to be a universal phenomenon in relationships; therefore, no specification was made for race or sexual orientation when stipulating the population parameters.

Sampling

The units of analysis for this study were married individuals. Due to the inclusion criteria stipulated for this study, individuals in the accessible population did not have an equal chance of being selected; therefore, random sampling was not possible. The researcher used a non-probability sampling method to obtain participants for this study (Maree & Pietersen, 2020). Snowball sampling was the non-probability sampling method chosen for this study (Pascoe, 2014). An advantage of snowball sampling is that the sample quota can be obtained in a short duration of time (Pascoe, 2014).

Individuals matching the inclusion criteria and known to the researcher were invited by email to participate in this study. In this email the researcher politely requested participants, if they felt comfortable to do so, to share the details of others whom they knew would meet the selection criteria of the study and who would be willing to participate in the study. Alternatively, if participants were willing, they could share the researcher's details with others who would be eager to participate in the study. In using this method of sampling, the researcher relied on participant referrals to recruit future participants until the sampling quota required for the study was met.

Given that snowball sampling consists of participants already known to the researcher, the sample may be biased towards the relational context of the researcher (Pascoe, 2014). This could potentially jeopardise the results of the study. However, with regards to this study, participants previously known to the researcher were only used as a starting point for gathering the sample. By using the referral method to complete the quota requirement, the

researcher addressed the possibility of bias by obtaining a sample which also included participants unknown to the researcher.

The Independent Institute of Education's (IIE) thesis guidelines stipulates that the minimum sample size required for a quantitative study is 20 participants. The sample size obtained for this study was 40 participants, thereby complying with IIE stipulations. In obtaining a larger sample and a sample, the included participants, both known and unknown to the researcher, the researcher attempted to obtain a diverse sample.

Data Collection

The researcher obtained ethical clearance from The IIE Ethics committee before commencing with the data collection process for the study. To view a copy of the ethical clearance letter, please see Annexure A.

The researcher chose to use an online survey as the data collection tool for this study. This survey aimed to obtain information from participants regarding partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction. As the online survey design is considered to be both objective and impartial, it aligned with the positivistic approach and quantitative nature of the research study (Maree & Pietersen, 2020). Sukamolson (2007) agrees that a survey is designed to collect data in a way that does not favour or discriminates against any group or culture in society, it is merely a data collection tool which carries no bias. Furthermore, the online survey used in this study allowed for complete anonymity; it was inexpensive to administer and required no additional human resources (du Plooy-Cilliers & Cronje, 2014).

In line with the cross-sectional nature of this study, after completing the online survey, the participants were only able submit their responses once. Du Plooy-Cilliers and Cronje (2014) explain that a survey that is cross-sectional in design requires data from participants to be collected only once in order to obtain information regarding the variables of the study at a single point in time.

One concern when using a survey design for data collection is the possibility of a low response rate (du Plooy-Cilliers & Cronje, 2014). However, the survey designed for this study was user friendly; it only took a few minutes to complete and was easy to submit online. This data collection method resulted in a good response from participants; the sample

obtained consisted of 40 submitted participant responses. This response rate was above the requirement for this study.

The online survey used to gather the data for this study included demographic questions and pre-developed Likert scales. The advantage of using Likert Scales is that they do not expect a simple yes or no answer from the participant, but rather allow for degrees of opinion, and even no opinion at all (Jamieson, 2004). The Partner Phubbing scale (Annexure C) and The Couple Satisfaction Index (Annexure D) were the two Likert scales included in the survey to measure the constructs of partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction.

The Procedure. The researcher used WhatsApp to contact friends, family and acquaintances who met the inclusion criteria of the study. If any of the individuals contacted via WhatsApp volunteered to participate in the study, the researcher followed up with an introductory email (Annexure B). The email which was sent to participants contained information regarding the topic of the study as well as details stipulating what participation in the study entailed. This information was provided to participants to enable them to make an informed decision on whether to participate or not.

The email sent to participants included a link to the online survey, which was created using Microsoft forms. Individuals willing to proceed were invited to click on a link at the end of the email. This link opened up the online survey. The survey was self-administered, allowing participants to complete the survey in their own time without interference from the researcher. As the survey was cross-sectional, the participants were required to answer and submit the completed survey only once.

At the beginning of the survey participants were required to give their consent to participate in the study. Only once consent was obtained was a participant able to continue with the survey. Should a participant select 'NO' as an answer to any of the questions asked in the introductory section of the survey, they were disqualified. An automated message was activated by the 'NO' selection, thanking them for their participation in the study. These participants were then unable to proceed further. Three participants were disqualified and unable to proceed with the study as they selected the option 'NO' to the question 'Do you reside in Durban?' Therefore, only participants who met the inclusion criteria of the study

were allowed to participate in the survey, thereby increasing the reliability and relevance of participant responses.

The first section of the survey consisted of non-identifying demographic questions. No names or personal information was required, thereby ensuring participant anonymity. The participants were then required to answer the second and third sections of the survey, which included the Partner Phubbing Scale (Annexure C), followed by the Couple Satisfaction Index (Annexure D). The format of the online survey required participants to complete all sections in the survey before their survey responses could be submitted for data analysis.

The Partner Phubbing Scale. A nine-item scale developed by Roberts and David (2016) was used in this survey. This scale was used in the study to assess the level of partner phubbing experienced by participants. The scale instructed participants to select responses from a 5-point Likert scale ranging from (1) - never to (5) - all the time. The questions all related to the participant's perception of their spouse's smartphone usage. Question number seven was the only reverse-scored question " My partner does not use his/her cell phone when we are out together". The total scores from the scale ranged from nine to 45, with higher scores indicating a higher perception of partner phubbing.

The Couples Satisfaction Index (CSI). The second scale included in the survey was the Couples Satisfaction Index (CSI). The CSI was developed by Funk and Rogge (2007) and used in the study to assess the relationship satisfaction experienced by the participants. The CSI is a 16-item measure of relationship satisfaction. One item uses a 7-point scale: "Please indicate the degree of happiness, all things considered, of your relationship", from 0=extremely happy to 6 = perfect. The other 15 items use a variety of responses which were all 6-point scales. Participants indicated to what extent each statement represented how they felt in their marital relationship. The scores that could be obtained from the CSI ranged from zero to 81. Higher scores indicated higher levels of satisfaction.

Data Analysis

Statistical analysis was used to interpret the responses obtained from the online survey. Statistical data analysis aligns with the positivistic approach of this study in that it is a mathematical technique used to ensure that the data collected will be interpreted accurately

and objectively (Khan, 2014). Pietersen and Maree (2020) explain that analysing data means to organise and summarise the data in a meaningful way. Microsoft Excel was one of the tools used by the researcher to capture and analyse the data collected for this study. The second tool used by the researcher to statistically analysis the data collected was an online tool, the Pearson's Correlational Coefficient Calculator (Social Science Statistics, 2020).

Pietersen & Maree (2020) posit that descriptive statistics are used in research to summarise the data collected and to make sense of it. The researcher used descriptive statistics to interpret the demographic data collected from participants. In doing so, the researcher was able to create a summary of the data collected. This summary provided the researcher with an understanding of the demographical characteristics of the sample used in this study.

Inferential statistics, specifically hypothesis testing, was then used to analyse the data collected. In order to gain new knowledge, conclusions need to be drawn from the data collected (Khan, 2014). To test the study's hypotheses, the researcher used the analysed data to determine whether the data collected supported the null hypothesis or rejected. This form of analysis enabled conclusions to be made based on the data collected (Pietersen & Maree, 2020).

The Procedure. Once participants had completed and submitted the survey online, the responses were automatically populated to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and saved on a password-protected SharePoint site. The researcher scored the data collected from the Partner Phubbing Scale as instructed by the developers Roberts and David (2016) and the from the CSI as stipulated by Funk and Rogge (2007) who developed the scale. The data analysis process began with a descriptive analysis of the data collected. The researcher used Microsoft Excel to calculate the distribution, central tendency and dispersion of the demographic data provided. Bar charts and a pie chart were used to summarise the demographics of the sample.

Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2013) state that a Pearson's r is designed to test for a correlation between two variables scored using interval or ratio measures. The Partner Phubbing scale and the Couple's Satisfaction Index used by the researcher to measure the variables of partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction are both ratio scales. Therefore, a

Pearson's r value was calculated in order to determine if a correlation exists between these two variables.

A Pearson correlation coefficient (Pearson's r) is the correlational statistic used to measure the degree of the relationship between variables with a linear relationship (Cohen et al., 2013). The researcher used Microsoft Excel to create a scatter plot of the data values to establish whether a linear relationship exists between the variables of partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction. Shevlyakov (2016) clarifies that a linear relationship indicates that as one variable gets bigger, the other variable gets proportionally smaller.

The scatter plot graph showed that a linear relationship does exist between the variables of partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction; therefore, a Pearson's r value was calculated using Microsoft Excel. The Pearson's r value not only determines if a correlation exists between two variables; it also calculates the direction and strength of the correlation (Cohen et al., 2013). The Pearson's r value enabled the researcher to answer the research question of the study. However, to determine if the findings are statistically significant in relation to the null hypothesis, the Pearson's r value is then used to calculate the Pearson's p -value (Cohen et al., 2013).

The researcher used the Pearson's Correlational Coefficient Calculator (Social Science Statistic, 2020) to determine the Pearson's p -value for the study. As mentioned previously, The Pearson's p -value was calculated to determine the statistical significance of the study. Research that is statistically significant implies that the results obtained from the study cannot be attributed to chance and therefore, do not support the null hypothesis (Shevlyakov, 2016). The researcher calculated the Pearson's p -value for the study in order to determine whether to accept or reject the null hypothesis.

Validity and Reliability

Koonin (2014) defines reliability and validity as the degree to which the measurement tools used in a research study are free from error and therefore, give consistent results. To be considered as reliable, the data collection tool used in a study needs to continuously measure what it is required to measure and to be valid the tools must only measure the variable that it is intended to measure (du Plooy-Cilliers & Cronje, 2014).

The data collection tool used in this study was an online survey which included two Likert scales, the Partner Phubbing Scale and The Couples Satisfaction Index (CSI). These scales were used to measure the variables, partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction. Likert scales, are known to show a high level of consistency in findings when a study is repeated using the same scales (Jamieson, 2004). Furthermore, the developers of both these Likert scales reported high validity and reliability (Funk & Rogge, 2007; Roberts & David, 2016).

Roberts and David (2016) the developers of the Partner Phubbing Scale reported a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.93, which indicates that the internal consistency and reliability of the scale is high. Funk and Rogge (2007) reported that the CSI 16-item scale showed excellent internal consistency with an alpha coefficient of .98. Furthermore, the CSI was found to have strong convergent validity and strong construct validity (Funk & Rogge, 2007). Therefore, the Partner Phubbing Scale and CSI were considered suitable to be included in this study.

To further ensure the reliability and validity of the study, the Partner Phubbing Scale and The Couples Satisfaction Scale were not altered in any way for this study but used as recommended by the developers of the scales.

In addition, the researcher pre-tested the survey using 10 volunteers known to the researcher. The results from the pre-test indicated that the consistency of the survey was high as each item in the survey repeatedly measured what it was intended to measure. Moreover, the pre-test enabled the researcher to confirm that the online survey was only measuring the variables of partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction as intended and nothing else.

Findings and Interpretation of Findings

Presentation of Findings

Descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics are used to provide an understanding of the characteristics of the data collected (Pietersen & Maree, 2020). Descriptive statistics have been used in this study to summarise and interpret the demographic information gathered from the sample.

The sample for this study consisted of 40 married South Africans, 29 (73%) female participants and 11 (27%) male participants. All participants reside in Durban, South Africa. Participants reported that both themselves and their spouses own and use a smartphone.

Figure 1

Participants by Gender

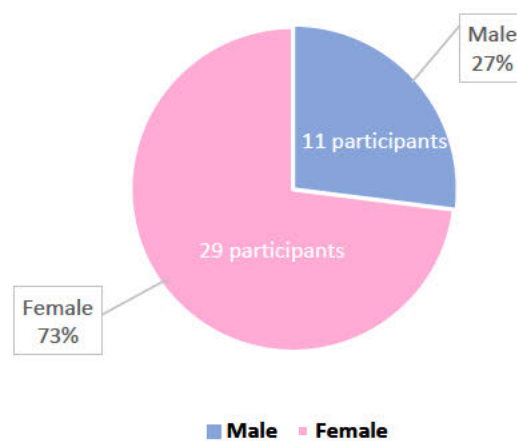


Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the gender demographics of this study. The sample for this study (n=40) consisted of 29 (73%) female participants and 11 (27%) male participants.

Figure 2

Participants by age category

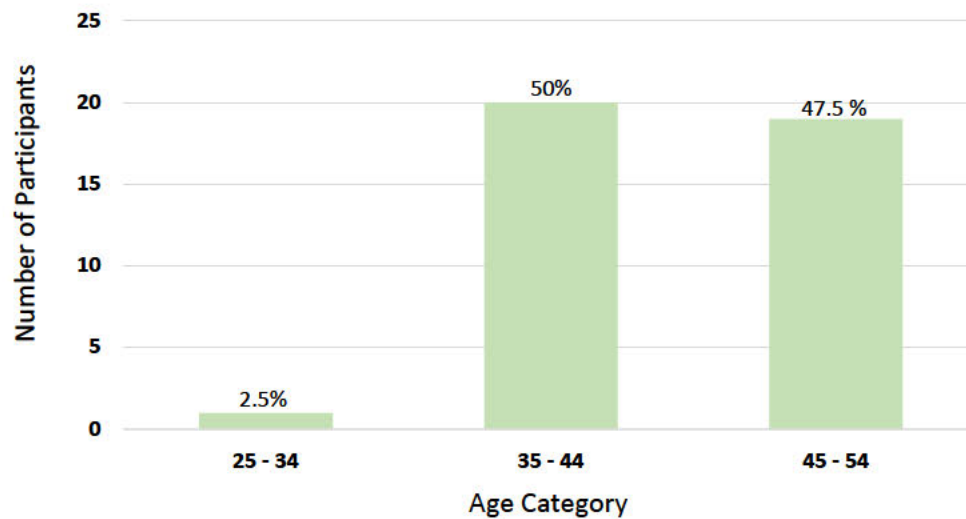


Figure 2 indicates the number of participants per age category. The online survey required participants to select one category from four age range categories provided. The age ranges for the study were, 25-34 years, 35-44 years, 45-54 years or 55 years and older. Only one female participant selected the 25 - 34 years age category with the 35 - 44 years and 45 - 54 years age categories making up the majority of the sample. 20 participants (50%) fell into the 35 - 44 years age category. 19 participants (47.5%) selected the age category of 45 to 54 years. There were no participants older than 54 years of age in this study.

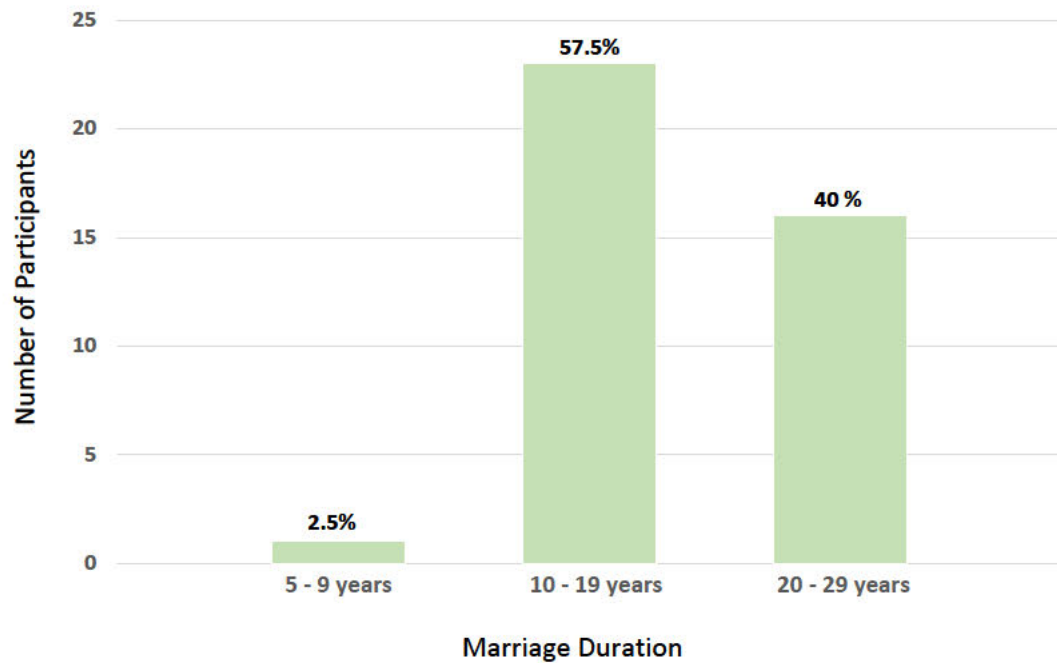
Figure 3*Participants by Marriage Duration*

Figure 3 above shows the marriage duration categories selected by the 40 participants. Only one (2.5%) participant from the sample selected the marriage duration category of 5 – 9 years and 16 (40%) participants were married for between 20 – 29 years. The majority of participants, 23 (57.5%) in total, indicated that they had been married from between 10 and 19 years.

To summarise, the sample for this study (n=40) consisted of 73 % female participants, 50% of all participants are aged between 35 and 44 years old and 57.5% of the participants indicated that they had been married for between 10 to 19 years.

Table 1

A Comparison of Central Tendency and Scores for the Partner Phubbing Scale and The Couples Satisfaction Index.

Likert Scale	Mean	Median	SD	Min	Max
Partner Phubbing Scale	26.67	26	5.73	13	37
Couples Satisfaction Index	56.47	58	16.08	10	75

Note. SD = Standard Deviation. Min = minimum score. Max = Maximum score.

The minimum and maximum scores calculated from the participant responses collected from the Partner Phubbing Scale and The Couples Satisfaction Index are shown in Table 1. Table 1 also shows the mean, median and standard deviation of each variable in the study. The mean score for partner phubbing was 26.67 (SD - 5.73) indicating that the average number of participants believed their spouses phubbed them.

Funk and Rogge (2007) stated that the dissatisfaction cut off score for the Couples Satisfaction Index is 57; this implies that a score below 57 will indicate relationship dissatisfaction. The mean score calculated for the Couples Satisfaction Index of this study determined average relationship satisfaction levels of 56.47 (SD – 16.08). This result indicates that on average participants in this study experienced moderate amounts of relationship dissatisfaction.

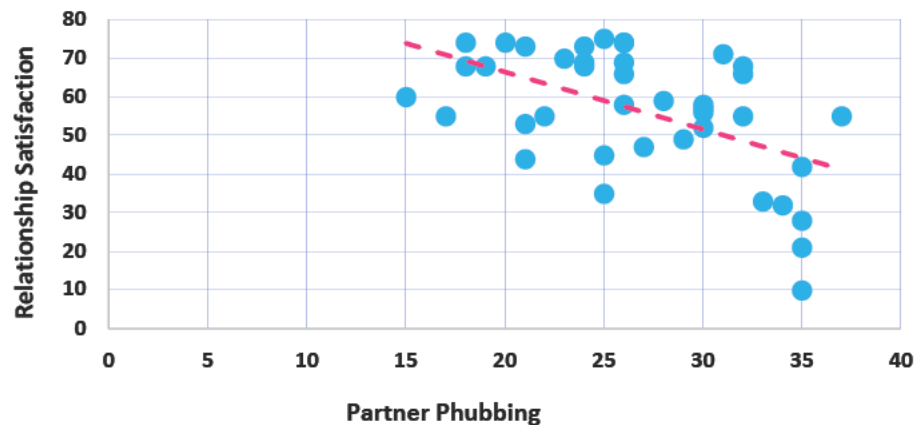
Inferential statistics. The researcher used inferential statistical analysis to make deductions from the data collected, test the research hypothesis and answer the research question. Hypothesis testing requires data to be analysed in order to infer whether the data collected supports the null hypothesis or rejects it in favour of the alternative hypothesis (Pietersen & Maree, 2020).

The researcher hypothesised that a negative correlation exists between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction in South African marriages. To determine if this hypothesised relationship exists, the researcher used Microsoft Excel to calculate the Pearson's correlation coefficient (Pearson's r) from the data collected. After which the

Pearson's p -value was calculated using the Pearson's Correlational Coefficient Calculator, a statistical tool found online (Social Science Statistic, 2020).

Figure 4

Scatter Plot of Partner Phubbing and Relationship Satisfaction



A Pearson's r is used to measure the direction and strength of the relationship between two variables with a linear relationship (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013). The researcher used Microsoft Excel to create a scatter plot from the data collected to establish whether a linear relationship exists between the variables of partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction. The scatter plot of the relationship between these two variables can be seen in Figure 4.

The Pearson's r calculated for this study was $r = -0.53$. A Pearson's r value of -0.53 indicates that there is a moderate, negative, linear relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction. Therefore, the Pearson's r value, $r = -0.53$, supports the scatter plot, as shown in Figure 4. This result suggests that as partner phubbing increases the relationship satisfaction of married South African's decreases.

The associated Pearson's p -value for this study was calculated to be $p = 0.000426$. This p -value indicates a significant relationship at both the 5% and 1% level. As the findings for this study are statistically significant, and the Pearson's p -value is $p < 0.01$, the results support the rejection of the null hypothesis: $H_0: p = 0$.

Interpretation of Findings

The descriptive statistical analysis of this study showed that the majority of the sample for this study consisted of adults who were aged 35 years and older and whom had been have been married for over 10 years. In addition the sample was 73 % female. Therefore it would be inappropriate to interpret the findings of this study without considering these statistics as they may have impacted the findings of the study. It is possible that females and males within the same relationship have different views on how partner phubbing effects their relationship, having a 73% female sample might mean the results are biased. Furthermore, the length of marriage might have an impact on the partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction reported, it is possible that different results would be observed if participants were married for less than 10 years. However, despite these considerations, the significant results obtained by the study are worth exploring.

The purpose of this study was to add to the current body of knowledge in South Africa regarding partner phubbing. In order to do so, the study aimed to determine if the variables of partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction experienced by South African married couples were correlated. The Pearson's r value calculated for this study, $r = -0.53$, indicated that there is a moderate negative relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction of married South Africans.

The significance level for this study was set at 5% with the Pearson's p-value calculated to be $p = 0.000426$, thereby providing evidence that the results of the study are statistically significant at both the 1% and the 5 % level. As $p < 0.01$ and the finding for this study quantitatively showed that in the sample of 40 married South African couples residing in Durban, a negative correlation exists between the variables of partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected in favour of the hypothesis (H_1).

Wang, Zhao and Lei's (2019) research found that partner phubbing had a detrimental effect on the relationship satisfaction experienced by participants who were married and not on the relationship satisfaction of unmarried participants. As a result, Wang et al. (2019) warned future researchers that ignoring marital status could result in inconsistencies in research findings. Heeding Wang et al.'s (2019) warning, this study focused solely on married

South African couples. The findings from the study were in line with that of researchers Wang et al. (2019) confirming that partner phubbing adversely affects the relationship satisfaction of married South African couples.

The results from this study show that as partner phubbing increases, relationship satisfaction decreases. Therefore, the findings from this study correspond with previous international studies which found that participants reported lower levels of relationship satisfaction when they experienced partner phubbing (Halpern & Katz, 2017; McDaniel & Coyne, 2016; Roberts & David, 2016). However, as the study focused on South African marriages, the findings of the study are contextually relevant to South Africa.

As stated previously, Burgoon's (1978) Expectation Violations Theory provided a theoretical framework with which to examine partner phubbing and its negative correlation to relationship satisfaction in South African marriages. Burgoon (1978) explains that an expectancy violation occurs when a person's expectation of another's behaviour is violated by the person's actual behaviour.

Researchers found that during face-to-face conversations, there is a shared expectation of undivided attention between spouses (Eisenhauer, 2018; Johnson, Kaiser & Swan, 2019; Miller-Ott & Kelly, 2016). Furthermore, previous studies show that the act of partner phubbing during face-to-face interactions with one's spouse is interpreted as a violation of the undivided attention expected during these interactions (Halpern & Katz, 2017; Krasnova et al., 2016; Roberts & David, 2016). Miller-Ott and Kelly (2016) advise that the Expectation Violation Theory's concept of valence needs to be considered in addition to the perceived violation of phubbing behaviour. Johnson et al. (2019) posit that partner phubbing is usually considered a negative behaviour when it occurs in face-to-face interactions and therefore, is negatively valenced. Moreover, researchers have found that negatively valenced behaviour can have a detrimental effect on relationships such as decreased levels of empathic concern, closeness and relationship quality (McDaniel & Drouin, 2019; Miller-Ott & Kelly, 2016).

The results from this study show partner phubbing to have a negative correlation with relationship satisfaction in South African marriages. Based on the findings of this study and those of previous studies, it is plausible that partner phubbing could be interpreted as being

negatively valenced, thereby providing a possible explanation for its detrimental effect on the relationship satisfaction experienced in South African marriages.

Conclusion

Research Question and Hypothesis Addressed

This study posed the question, ‘Is there a relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction in South African marriages? The researcher attempted to address this question quantitatively by collecting data from participants using an online survey; this method ensured that the data collected was objective and measurable. The analysis of the data collected provided statistically significant results which enabled the research question to be answered. The overall findings from this study show that yes, there is a relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction in South African marriages.

The objective of this research study was to identify if a correlation exists between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction in South African marriages. The Pearson’s correlation coefficient calculated for this study was $r = -0.53$, statistically proving that a negative correlation exists between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction in South African marriages.

The hypothesis (H_1) stated by the researcher predicted that there is a negative correlation between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction in South African marriages. Statistical analysis was used to test this hypothesis. The Pearson’s p-value calculated for the study, $p = 0.000426$, indicates that the variables of partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction are significantly correlated at both the 5% and 1% level. Furthermore, the Pearson’s Correlational coefficient, $r = -0.53$ identified a moderate negative correlation between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction in South African marriages. Therefore the findings of the study support the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_0) in favour of the hypothesis (H_1) given that the research determined a negative correlation between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction in South African marriages.

Lastly, this study proposed to address the gap identified in existing literature by determining the correlation between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction in South African marriages. The findings from this research study objectively show that partner phubbing has a negative correlation to relationship satisfaction in South African marriages. The results from this study thereby add to the existing body of knowledge by providing findings regarding partner phubbing that are contextually relevant in South Africa.

Implications of Findings

The findings from this research study may have implications in the field of counselling psychology for both couples and individuals. By determining that partner phubbing has a negative correlation to relationship satisfaction in South African marriages, the results from this study demonstrate a need for therapists working with couples to consider the impact that smartphone use can have on relationship satisfaction. When counselling a couple, a therapist could consider including a few questions relating to the couple's technology and smartphone use in order to determine whether a partner's smartphone or technology use is creating problems within their relationship.

Moreover, researchers have found that couples who develop etiquettes relating to technological device usage during their time together reported lower levels of relationship dissatisfaction (Eisenhauer, 2018; Kelly, Miller-Ott & Duran, 2017; McDaniel & Coyne, 2016). For couples who are experiencing dissatisfaction in their relationship due to partner phubbing or interference from other devices, a therapist might encourage couples to openly communicate when it is acceptable to use devices and when it is not. A therapist could help couples negotiate the rules and processes related to smartphone and other technological device use that may be negatively impacting their relationship functioning.

McDaniel and Coyne (2016) found that the distraction of a smartphone during a face-to-face interaction may elicit the same psychological responses as rejection. Participants reported that when a romantic partner attends to their phone while in the middle of a conversation with them, they experience feelings of hurt, a drop in self-esteem and an increase in anger and resentment (McDaniel & Coyne, 2016). When counselling an individual who is experiencing dissatisfaction or problems in their romantic relationship, a

therapist might consider including questions similar to the one's used in this study to determine if partner phubbing could be adding to their client's distress.

Although international studies found that there is no difference in the effects of partner phubbing on relationship satisfaction between males and females, Vogels and Anderson (2020) disagree. Vogels and Anderson (2020) posit that men and women in romantic relationships view the distractions caused by smartphone use differently, and therefore their satisfaction with conversations and relationships will be different. Consequently, the current study calls for future research to address the role of gender in regards to partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction in South African marriages. In addition, future research in this area would benefit from studying both spouses in the marriage to develop a deeper understanding of how partner phubbing relates to relationship satisfaction.

Research by Chotpitayasunondh and Douglas (2016) found that older adults tend to evaluate their partner's smartphone behaviour as being worse than their own. Therefore, in future studies it would be useful to examine the influence of age on the phenomenon of partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction in South Africa in future studies.

A review of existing literature showed that studies regarding partner phubbing in South Africa are minimal. By examining the relationship implications of smartphone use during face-to-face interactions of married South Africans, this study aimed to add to the field of research regarding the social and relational implications of smartphone use. In determining that partner phubbing has a negative correlation to relationship satisfaction in South African marriages, the study was able to add to the existing body of knowledge. Furthermore, this study provided insights regarding the relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction as it pertains to South African marriages, thereby providing findings that are contextually relevant in South Africa.

This study may have provided results which add to the understanding regarding smartphones, partner phubbing and relationships satisfaction within South Africa. However, there are many complexities in this area of research that future research can address. As many aspects of a couple's relationship could not be included in this correlational study, researchers

should continue to explore this area in order to understand the impact that smartphones and other mobile devices can or are having on relationships.

Ethical Considerations

Louw (2014) emphasises the importance of ethical guidelines in research involving human beings. In line with these guidelines and those of the IIE Ethics policy, the research for this study was ethically conducted by observing the following:

Participants. Before conducting any research, ethical clearance was obtained from the IIE ethics committee. Only once the researcher had received the letter confirming ethical clearance for the study was an email sent to all participants who had volunteered to take part in this study. Details regarding the study were fully disclosed to participants in the email before they completed the online survey. This email clearly stated that participation in this study was voluntary and that participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any stage without prejudice. All participants were treated with respect and dignity throughout the research process. Participants anonymity was protected as the survey required no personal details other than non-identifying demographic information. Therefore responses could not be attributed to any one participant. Confidentiality is essential, and participants were informed that the data collected from the survey would not be shared and would only be used for this research study. Furthermore, the researcher disclosed that all data collected from the survey would be stored securely within a password protected Excel database on a SharePoint site for five years, after which it would be destroyed.

Researcher. The survey, which was the data collection method used for this study, was complete anonymously, online without the researcher present, thereby negating the possibility of researcher interference or bias. The researcher upheld all assurances of participant confidentiality, anonymity and privacy. The researcher provided full transparency with regards to the research study and respected the rights of the participants to withdraw from the study at any time. To uphold the integrity of the study, the researcher used Microsoft forms for data collection with the data collected automatically populated to Microsoft Excel. This process made it difficult for the researcher to manipulate or falsify the data collected. Fuchs (2020) supports this method of data collection and analysis in stating that today online

survey software provides a reliable means by which to gather information in an ethical manner (Fuchs, 2020).

Limitations

As with other research studies, this study is subject to limitations. The sample for this study consisted of 40 participants who met the inclusion criteria required to take part in this study. However, Maree and Pietersen (2020) postulate that a small sample size is considered a limitation in quantitative research. The researcher was aware that inferences from a small sample along with the inclusion of population parameters would limit the generalisability of the findings of the study. Due to the time constraints and the guidelines supplied by the IIE, the sample size for this study was warranted. Future research that is not restrained by time or the IIE guidelines might consider using a larger sample to ensure that the findings from the study can be generalised to the broader population.

Furthermore, as the sample for this study ($n = 40$) consisted of 29 (73%) female participants, it was not very representative in terms of gender. McDaniel and Drouin (2018) posit that a predominately female sample may be considered biased towards the experiences of women. However, previous studies show that husbands and wives report similar experiences with regards to partner phubbing behaviour in their relationship (Halpern & Katz, 2017; McDaniel & Coyne, 2016). Therefore despite the sample ($n = 40$) being predominantly female, the findings from the study are still considered relevant. However, future researchers might consider a sampling method that will ensure an equal number of male and female participants to circumvent the possibility of bias and to detect gender differences within the South African context.

The research design of this study may be considered a limitation, in that only a negative relationship could be determined. A causal relationship could not be deduced as the findings from this study were unable to determine whether partner phubbing behaviour decreases relationship satisfaction or if decreased relationship satisfaction increase partner phubbing behaviour. However, considering the purpose of this quantitative study was to determine the correlation between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction, the researcher did not aim to establish causation. In order to determine a causal relationship, future research could consider using an experimental research design.

The Partner Phubbing Scale and the Couple Satisfaction Index were the Likert scales used to collect data from participants in this study. Likert scales are often considered a limitation in research as participants are unable to provide further clarification regarding their responses (du Plooy-Cilliers & Cronje, 2014). However, as the purpose of this study was to quantitatively determine the correlation between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction, a subjective understanding of the variables, partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction, was not required. Future research may benefit from a qualitative study to obtain further clarification regarding participant responses, thereby adding to the findings from this research study.

Although the findings of this study need to be considered in light of the limitations mentioned, the results obtained from this study form a basis and provide direction for future research regarding partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction in marriages.

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Annexure A – Ethical Clearance Certificate



Re: Approval of Psychology Honours Proposal and Ethics Clearance

HONOURS ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER



Your research proposal and the ethical implications of your proposed research topic were reviewed by your supervisor and the campus research panel, a subcommittee of The Independent Institute of Education's Research and Postgraduate Studies Committee.

Your research proposal posed no significant ethical concerns and your supporting documents and instruments are in order to proceed. We hereby provide you with permission to proceed with your research.

In the event of you deciding to change your research methodology in any way, kindly consult your supervisor to ensure all ethical considerations are adhered to and pose no risk to any participant or party involved. A revised ethical clearance letter will be issued.

We wish you all the best with your research!

GENERAL CONDITIONS TO BE FULFILLED IN RELATION TO RESEARCH

Permission is granted to proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met and may be withdrawn should any of these conditions be flouted.

Please note: The panel has not considered the merits, accuracy or ethical soundness of the research. The only merits examined are the use of The IIE as a sample.

Permission is granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The researcher(s) will need to obtain informed consent in writing from all of the participants in his/ her sample if the study is not anonymous.

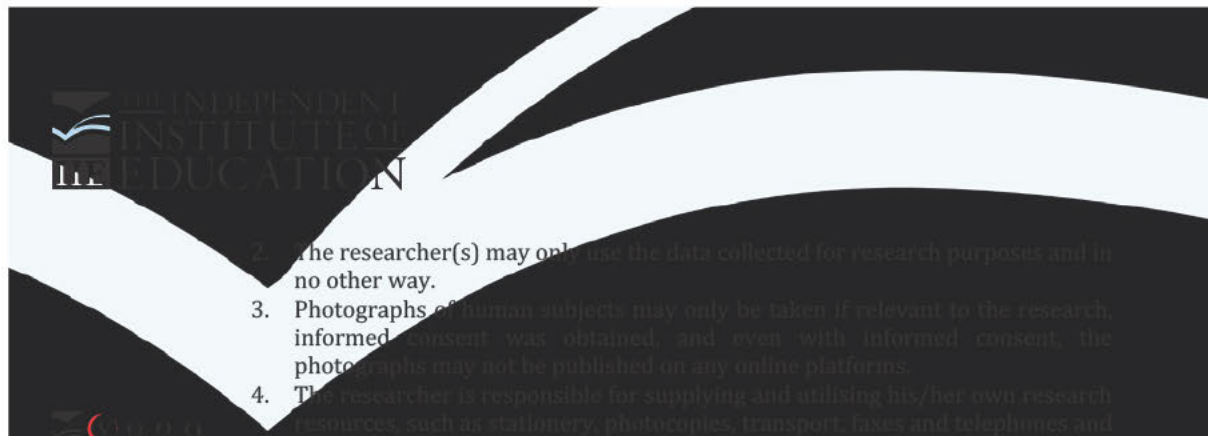
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Directors: RJ Douglas (UK), JDR Oesch*, MD Aitken*, FJ Coughlan* (*Non-executive)

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THE INDEPENDENT INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

- The researcher(s) may only use the data collected for research purposes and in no other way.
- Photographs of human subjects may only be taken if relevant to the research, informed consent was obtained, and even with informed consent, the photographs may not be published on any online platforms.
- The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, taxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
- No names or identifying information of participants may be used within the research and the research must be voluntary.
- Please make it clear that the information will not be used punitively in any way and participants may in no way be counselled/advised based on this.






 Supervisor
 Leigh De Wet


 Campus Postgraduate Coordinator
 Dr Samantha Thomas

Annexure B - Covering Email with Survey Link

Hi there,

My name is Nicole Rencken. I am a psychology honours student at The IIE's Varsity College and currently conducting research under the supervision of Leigh de Wet. This research aims to explore the relationship between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction in married South African couples. Partner phubbing for the purpose of this study is defined as the behaviour of ignoring one's spouse or partner during a face-to-face conversation to attend to one's smartphone.

The information gathered from this research will form part of my psychology honours thesis. My hope is that this research will provide additional information regarding the social and relational implications of smartphones in the face-to-face interactions of South Africans.

If you are a South African who is over the age of 18, in a marriage where both spouses own and use a smartphone and you reside in Durban, I would greatly appreciate your participation in this study. To participate all you need to do is click on the link at the end of this email. This link will open up an online survey which should take you approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Your participation in this study is completely anonymous. Once you click on the link to the survey no names or personal identifying information will be required. In this way responses cannot be attributed to any one participant.

The data from the survey will not be shared and will only be used for the purpose of this study. All data will be securely stored within a password protected Excel database on a SharePoint site.

Please be aware that there are no direct risks to you should you chose to participate in this study. You are welcome to withdraw from the study at any point before reaching the end of the survey by merely closing the survey. However, once the survey has been submitted you will be unable to withdraw your response due to the anonymity of the response.

I hope the information provided in this email will enable you to make an informed decision about whether to participate or not.

For further information relating to this research, please contact me at the following email address [REDACTED] or my supervisor Leigh De Wet at [REDACTED]

Kind regards
Nicole Rencken

To access the online survey please click on the link:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=2uWA8qnAHUq1g7tQ1fYLY4ebLNoAwFNAl78tFTdf6z9UOUc5NEIDSFcxMFZRM0dUWk5WSk1VMFc0Uy4u>

It is important to understand that by completing and submitting the survey that you are consenting to participate in the survey.

Annexure C – Partner Phubbing Scale

PLEASE INDICATE HOW OFTEN THE FOLLOWING SCENARIOS OCCUR IN YOUR LIFE					
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	All the time.
During a typical mealtime that my partner and I spend together my partner pulls out and checks his/her cell phone.					
My partner places his/her cell phone where they can see it when we are together					
My partner keeps his/her cell phone in their hand when he or she is with me					
When my partners cell phone rings or beeps, he/she pulls it out even if we are in the middle of a conversation					
My partner glances at his/her cell phone when talking to me					
During leisure time that my partner and I are able to spend together, my partner uses his/her cell phone					
My partner does not use his/her cell phone when we are out together					
My partner uses her/her cell phone when we are out together					
If there is a lull in our conversation my partner will check his/her cell phone					

Annexure D – Couple Satisfaction Index

1 Please indicate the degree of happiness, all things considered, of your relationship.

Extremely Unhappy	Fairly Unhappy	A Little Unhappy	Happy	Very Happy	Extremely Happy	Perfect		
0	1	2	3	4	5	6		
			All the time	Most of the time	More often than not	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
2. In general, how often do you think that things between you and your partner are going well?			5	4	3	2	1	0

	Not at all TRUE	A little TRUE	Some-what TRUE	Mostly TRUE	Almost Completely TRUE	Completely TRUE
3. Our relationship is strong	0	1	2	3	4	5
4. My relationship with my partner makes me happy	0	1	2	3	4	5
5. I have a warm and comfortable relationship with my partner	0	1	2	3	4	5
6. I really feel like part of a team with my partner	0	1	2	3	4	5

	Not at all	A little	Some-what	Mostly	Almost Completely	Completely
7. How rewarding is your relationship with your partner?	0	1	2	3	4	5
8. How well does your partner meet your needs?	0	1	2	3	4	5
9. To what extent has your relationship met your original expectations?	0	1	2	3	4	5
10. In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?	0	1	2	3	4	5

For each of the following items, select the answer that best describes *how you feel about your relationship*. Base your responses on your first impressions and immediate feelings about the item.

11. INTERESTING	5	4	3	2	1	0	BORING
12. BAD	0	1	2	3	4	5	GOOD
13. FULL	5	4	3	2	1	0	EMPTY
14. STURDY	5	4	3	2	1	0	FRAGILE
15. DISCOURAGING	0	1	2	3	4	5	HOPEFUL
16. ENJOYABLE	5	4	3	2	1	0	MISERABLE

Research Purpose/ Objective	Primary Research Question	Research Rationale	Seminal Authors/ Sources	Literature Review – Conceptual Framework	Paradigm	Approach	Data Collection Method(s)	Ethics	Key Findings	Recommendations
The purpose of this quantitative study is to determine the correlation between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction of married South African couples.	Is there a correlation between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction in South African marriages?	Smartphone use has increased and begun to impact many aspects of human life. Partner Phubbing has become a common occurrence in society. However, there is a lack of research pertaining to partner phubbing and the social and relational effects of smartphones in South Africa. The study proposed to address the gap in research & provide data relevant to South Africa.	Burgoon, J.K (1978) Robert and David (2016) Przybylski and Weinstein (2013)	Theme 1: Smartphones in South Africa Theme 2: Smartphones in relationships Theme 3: Smartphones in romantic relationships Theme 4: Partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction in marriages	Paradigm Positivism Epistemology Data gained from the study will provide knowledge that is objective and based on empirical evidence. Ontology Reality is governed by laws. Reality is external and can be measured scientifically. This study requires the variables of partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction to be measured empirically to determine a correlation. Axiology In this study the researcher will remain independent of the variables being measured ensuring the research is value-free.	Quantitative Population Population Parameters -Married -both spouses are smartphone users -South African nationality -Reside in Durban	An online Cross-sectional survey using Microsoft Forms. A link for the self-administered survey was emailed to participants. Partner Phubbing Scale and Couples Satisfaction index formed part of the online Survey	Researcher – Provided full transparency of research, no researcher bias as online survey so no interference. Method of analysis and collection didn't allow for falsifying data therefore integrity. Participants – Informed consent Voluntary participation Anonymity and Confidentiality Data securely stored	Results determined that there is a negative correlation between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction in South African marriages.	It would be beneficial for future studies to include both spouses in the marriage in the research to get a better understanding of partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction. Researchers could consider studying the possible moderating effects of gender, age or relationship length in future studies.
Research Problem	Secondary Questions/ Hypotheses / Objectives	Key Concepts	Key Theories			Sampling	Data Analysis Method(s)	Limitations	Key Contribution	
Review of literature in relation to phubbing revealed no existing South African research. This study proposes to address this problem by focusing on South African married couples.	H ₁ – There is a negative correlation between partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction. H ₀ : P=0 H ₁ : P<0	- Partner Phubbing -Relationship satisfaction -Expectancies -Valence	The Expectation Violation theory. (Burgoon, 1978)			Non-probability Not everyone has equal chance of being selected for the sample Sampling method Snow- Ball sampling Size 40 married individuals	Unit of Analysis Married Individuals Statistical analysis: *Descriptive and Inferential (Hypothesis testing) *Pearson's r * Pearson's p-value	Data was self-reported which has the potential for respondent bias. Participants were obtained through snow-ball sampling which may account for the lack of diversity in the sample. Small sample size did not allow for the findings of the quantitative study to be generalised to the broader population	The research has potential implications in the field of psychology within South Africa. As the smartphones become more entrenched in our human interactions and encounters this study could provide insights for couple therapy and therapeutic interventions.	A research design that determines causation and not only a correlation is worth researching in the future.