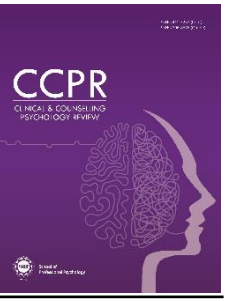
Clinical & Counselling Psychology Review (CCPR)
Volume 7 Issue 2, Fall 2025
ISSN$_{(P)}$: 2412-5253, ISSN$_{(E)}$: 2706-8676
Homepage: https://journals.umt.edu.pk/index.php/CCPR



Title:	**Attachment Dimensions as Moderators of the Relationship Between Partner Phubbing and Marital Satisfaction in Generation Z**
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DOI:	https://doi.org/10.32350/ccpr.72.05
History	Received: August 12, 2025, Revised: November 04, 2025, Accepted: November 27, 2025, Published: December 31, 2025
Citation:	Khilji, B. K., & Ambreen, S. (2025). Attachment dimensions as moderators of the relationship between partner phubbing and marital satisfaction in Generation Z. *Clinical and Counselling Psychology Review*, *7*(2), 92–111. https://doi.org/10.32350/ccpr.72.05
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Conflict of Interest:	Author(s) declared no conflict of interest

A publication of
School of Professional Psychology
University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan

Attachment Dimensions as Moderators of the Relationship Between Partner Phubbing and Marital Satisfaction in Generation Z

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Abstract

The current study aimed to explore the relationship between partner phubbing, attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance, and marital satisfaction in the context of Generation Z married Pakistani adults through cross-sectional correlational design. A total of 300 married individuals (18-28 years) were chosen using purposive sampling strategy. The Partner Phubbing Scale, Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised questionnaire, and Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale were used to collect the data. To analyze the data, hierarchical regression analysis, moderated mediation (PROCESS Model 5), and independent sample t-tests were used. The results indicated that marital satisfaction was negatively related to partner phubbing. The relationship between phubbing of the partner and marital satisfaction was partially mediated by attachment anxiety with attachment avoidance intensifying the relationship and was a form of moderated mediation. Conditional indirect effects also indicated that the anxiety-mediated effect was greater in increased levels of avoidance. Attachment dimensions described a substantial amount of variance in marital satisfaction but no significant gender difference was reported in partner phubbing, attachment patterns, and marital satisfaction. The results of these studies show the harmful impact of technology-related distraction and insecure attachment tendencies on the status of marital well-being among digitally connected youthful couples and indicate the necessity of awareness and preventive counseling measures.

***Keywords*:** attachment insecurity, generation Z, marital satisfaction, moderated mediation, partner phubbing

Introduction

The dominance of smartphones continues to change the spirit of interaction among couples with partners having endless connectivity and experiencing continual, unpaid attention distractions of face-to-face

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communication (Przybylski & Weinstein, 2013). Research has demonstrated that the presence of a smartphone in a conversation can adversely affect the quality of a conversation and perceived relationship intimacy (Przybylski & Weinstein, 2013). Phubbing, meaning one neglects their partner in favor of using a smartphone, was found to be linked to decreasing levels of relationship satisfaction and relational well-being, again. As an illustration, partner phubbing is negatively related to relationship satisfaction, and attachment anxiety mediates this connection between young adults (Han et al., 2025). A Pakistani study, which was recently conducted, also discovered that an increased level of partner phubbing is associated with a reduction in marital satisfaction (Zahra et al., 2025). Another meta-analytic study affirmed that partner phubbing always negatively impacts relationship satisfaction, intimacy, and emotional closeness in a variety of samples (Ni et al., 2025). Following this, studies on phubbing (phone snubbing) and technoference (technology interruptions) have always shown negative correlations with perceived partner responsiveness, intimacy, and relationship satisfaction. Roberts and David (2016) provided the foundational study on partner-phubbing by showing that perceived partner phubbing was also associated with reduced relationship satisfaction and more partner phone-use conflict, which were subsequently replicated and extended to cross-sectional and diary designs (Beukeboom & Pollmann, 2021; McDaniel & Coyne, 2016; Roberts & David, 2016).

Mechanisms that explain these effects focus on perceived exclusion and decreased partner responsiveness. One example of this is that Beukeboom and Pollmann (2021) discovered that the relationship between phubbing and satisfaction was mediated by feelings of exclusion and being less responsive. Daily-diary designs also demonstrate within-person drops in same-day satisfaction on days involving phubbing, which are followed by heightened negative affect or retaliatory efforts (Frackowiak et al., 2022; Thomas et al., 2022). A meta-analytic review also supports the claim of a small to moderate negative correlation between perceived partner phubbing and relationship quality with perceived exclusion and perceived reduced responsiveness as very common mediators (Ni et al., 2025). Notably, the perceived phubbing does not seem to have a less harmful stance in comparison to the self-reported enacted phone use by the partners. Carnelley et al. (2025) demonstrated that perceived partner phubbing was associated with worse relationship quality, whereas enacted

phubbing was not.This highlights the importance of subjective interpretation, for instancethe sense of being used or rejected, in the outcomes. Motivations to phubbing are moderated by individual differences. Attachment orientation is also found to be a moderating factor: high levels of attachment anxiety tend to respond more negatively to phubbing, with more jealousy, distress, and reassurance-seeking, whereas avoidant partners tend to moderate their reactions (Brennan et al., 1998; Carnelley et al., 2024; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Self-esteem, marital status, and joint phone use also have a moderating effect, and shared phone activities mitigate adverse effects sometimes (Beukeboom & Pollmann, 2021; Mosley& Parker, 2023; Wang et al., 2019). Phubbing and technoference have been associated with not only relational outcomes but are also related to some more general well-being problems, including sleep problems and depressive symptoms, although these effects generally do not appear in couple-centered settings (Kardefelt-Winther, 2014). Most of the studies are cross-sectional but diary and quasi-longitudinal research indicates that phone disruptions are antecedents of same-day decreases in relational well-being (McDaniel & Drouin, 2019; Thomas et al., 2022).This is why longitudinal and experimental studies that can establish causality are noteworthy.

More recent studies offer finer details in terms of mechanisms and moderators. Han et al. (2025) discovered that phubbing lowered relationship satisfaction via attachment anxiety and constructive coping styles of conflict (voice, loyalty) mitigated the impacts. In Türkiye, Erzen and Tasdemir (2025) found that anxious-ambivalent attachment and poorer well-being were associated with higher phubbing but not secure and avoidant attachment style and relationship satisfaction. This indicated that phubbing might serve as a coping behavior against relational insecurity. Likewise, Mosley and Parker (2023) with a dyadic design revealed that phubbing increased the negative effect of both attachment anxiety and avoidance on couple satisfaction. A gender difference has also been reported: Wang et al. (2025) identified that perceived partner responsiveness mediated the phubbing relationship quality in women but not in men, and social support mediated most of the relationships. There are other pieces of evidences that highlight the indirect impacts of phubbing on the general life outcomes. Yam (2023) revealed that though phubbing did not directly predict life satisfaction, it adversely predicted relationship satisfaction and perceived romantic quality that in turn

predicted life satisfaction, this shows complete mediation. Multiple studies by David and Roberts (2021) indicated that phubbing was a stimulator of romantic jealousy and reduced satisfaction especially among those who were high in attachment anxiety. Shrivastav et al. (2025) highlighted phubbing as a habitual and an avoidance behavior, which is linked to smartphone addiction, loneliness, and anxiety and suggested that direct engagement should be prioritized to enhance satisfaction and well-being.

Context-specific research has been found focusing on cultural and relational differences. In Pakistan Sharafat et al. (2025) identified the direct correlation between partner phubbing, lower relationship satisfaction and greater conflict in relationship in women undergoing more pubbing. In the United States, Kanaganayagam (2024) found that, marriage satisfaction had a negative relationship with attachment anxiety and avoidance, which was mediated by social media use. Rinaldi et al. (2025) revealed in Indonesia that phubbing, on the one hand, and loneliness, on the other hand, decreased marital satisfaction in Generation Z couples but there was no mediation effect of loneliness. Wang and Zhao (2022) identified a sequential pattern of mediation in China in which phubbing decreased marital interaction, conflict, and consequently decreased satisfaction.

Theoretical Framework

Partner phubbing has relational implications that can be explained using multiple theoretical perspectives, which complement each other. Attachment theory (Brennan et al., 1998; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007) is the reason as to why the individual differences in attachment orientations have been known to mediate when it comes to responding to relationship threats. Attachment-anxious people are particularly observant of rejection signs and easily interpret phubbing to mean neglect or abandonment, thus increasing emotional distress and reducing satisfaction. On the other hand, individuals having a higher degree of attachment avoidance tend to disconnect more than the others in reaction to phubbing and finding fewer chances to be near and supportive and solving conflicts constructively. The interpersonal acceptance-rejection theory (Rohner, 2016) highlights the role of perceived acceptance and rejection in the development of relationship quality as well. To this end, phubbing can be considered as a microaggression of rejection that diminishes the experience of acceptance and undermines the security of relationships. This can accumulate with

cumulative effects, degrading marital satisfaction over time. Compensatory internet use theory (Kardefelt-Winther, 2014) is another concept which is a notion that individuals are inclined to use digital devices as a means to help deal with stress, boredom, or psychological needs that have not been fulfilled yet. Despite the fact that such kinds of behaviors may provide some relief in the short-term, they also leave a vacuum where face-to-face contact may be; thereby, causing additional distance in relationships. Phubbing may therefore be the avoidance method in marriage that sabotages intimacy and satisfaction in marriage without intention.

The Current Study

Although the literature continues to associate partner phubbing with lowered relationship satisfaction and insecure attachment (Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas, 2016; McDaniel & Coyne, 2016; Roberts & David, 2016; Wang et al., 2017), how this relationship is mediated remains an under-researched area. In particular, it is not evident how the dimensions associated with attachment influence or modify the strength of this relationship. To occupy this gap, this study aimed to set out the conceptual framework (Fig. 1). Herein, attachment anxiety would be the mediating factor between partner phubbing and marital satisfaction but the latter would be moderated by attachment avoidance. By doing so, one could gain a more accurate insight into how digital distractions influence intimate relationships. Furthermore, certain underlying conditions could also be examined under which their harmful impact can be either increased or minimized among Generation Z couples.

Research Objectives

The current study aimed to address the following objectives:

- To examine the association between partner phubbing and marital satisfaction among Generation Z couples.
- To investigate the relationship between partner phubbing and adult attachment dimensions (anxiety and avoidance).
- To test whether adult attachment dimensions mediate the relationship between partner phubbing and marital satisfaction.
- To determine whether adult attachment dimensions moderate the

strength of the association between partner phubbing and marital satisfaction.

- To explore gender differences in partner phubbing, attachment dimensions, and marital satisfaction.

Based on the existing literature and relevant theoretical frameworks, the study proposed the following hypotheses:

H1. Partner phubbing would be negatively associated with marital satisfaction.

H2. Partner phubbing would be positively associated with adult attachment dimensions.

H3. Adult attachment dimensions would mediate the relationship between partner phubbing and marital satisfaction.

H4. Adult attachment dimensions would moderate the relationship between partner phubbing and marital satisfaction.

H5. Gender differences would emerge in partner phubbing, attachment dimensions, and marital satisfaction among Generation Z couples.

Method

Participants

The sample comprised 300 married Generation Z individuals (18-28 years) living in Pakistan. Participants were recruited (using a purposive non-probability sampling strategy) based on eligibility criteria: being legally married and cohabiting with their spouse.

Measures

Partner Phubbing Scale (PPS)

The PPS was to determine how participants felt towards their partners being distracted by smartphones while having interpersonal interactions. Questions were assessed on a 5-point Likert scale (1 to 5) of *never* to *always*. The increase in the scores indicated the higher frequency of phubbing. The previous research also indicated high levels of internal consistency and construct validity of the PPS (Roberts & David, 2016).

Experiences in Close Relationships–Revised (ECR-R)

The ECR-R was used to measure adult attachment and it takes two

dimensions: attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance. The tool has 36 items with a differential of 7 (1 = *strongly disagree* and 7 = *strongly agree*). A higher score signifies a higher insecurity on the corresponding dimensions of attachment. The ECR-R is highly tested and exhibits good psychometric qualities (Fraley et al., 2000).

Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMSS)

The KMSS was used to measure global marital satisfaction and is comprised of three items that measure overall satisfaction in a relationship. Answers are provided on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *extremely dissatisfied* to 7 = *extremely satisfied*), where the higher the scale the more the satisfaction. The KMSS is common in marital and cross-cultural studies and it has demonstrated high reliability (Schumm et al., 1986).

Procedure

Data collection was carried out by using both online surveys and paper-based questionnaires to facilitate wider access. Participants were made aware of the purpose of the study, were assured of the anonymity of their answers, and were requested to give informed consent prior to the study. The study received ethical approval by the Institutional Review Board of the relevant university before data collection, and all the procedures adhered to the set ethical standards of conducting psychological research.

Data Analysis

Statistical analyses were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 26. Descriptive statistics and Pearson's correlation coefficients were computed to examine associations among the study variables. To test the hypothesized mediation and moderation effects, the PROCESS macro for SPSS (Hayes, 2018) was employed. Specifically, Model 5 was used for moderate mediation analysis with partner phubbing, attachment dimensions, and marital satisfaction serving as the focal variables.

Results

The sample consisted of 300 Generation Z married adults: 152 females (50.7%), 148 males (49.3%), and all of them were permanently residing in Pakistan. The participants were aged between 18-28 (M = 25.6, SD = 4.2). The average years of marital status were 3.1% (SD=2.0). Education levels

were undergraduate/bachelor (57.7%) and postgraduate (42.3%). Majority of the respondents (62%) lived in urban settings with 38.0% living in rural settings. The average time per day on smartphones was 5.2% (*SD* = 1.7). The survey was online and in person, and the process was confidential among all the individuals.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Reliability of Partner Phubbing, Attachment Dimensions and Marital Satisfaction (N = 300)

Measure	*k*	Range	*M*	*SD*	*α*
Partner Phubbing Scale	9	9–90	86.80	8.90	.71
Attachment Anxiety	18	18–126	92.45	12.30	.88
Attachment Avoidance	18	18–126	88.12	11.75	.86
Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale	3	3–21	15.60	3.45	.91

According to Table 1, the participants stated lower levels of partner phubbing (*M* = 86.80, *SD* = 8.90) and moderate-to-high levels of attachment anxiety (*M* = 92.45, *SD* = 12.30) and avoidance (*M* = 88.12, *SD* = 11.75). Marital satisfaction was moderately high (*M* = 15.60, *SD* = 3.45). Every measure had acceptable to excellent internal consistency (.71— .91).

Table 2

Pearson Product Moment Correlations between Partner Phubbing, Attachment Dimensions, and Marital Satisfaction (N = 300)

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Partner Phubbing	-			
2. Attachment Anxiety	.32**	-		
3. Attachment Avoidance	.28**	.35**	-	
4. Marital Satisfaction	-.41**	-.37**	-.33**	-

Note. ***$p < .01$.

The correlation analysis revealed that there were significant relationships between partner phubbing, attachment orientations, and marital satisfaction. It was further established that increased levels of partner phubbing were associated with both attachment anxiety and avoidance, a fact that implies insecure attachment tendencies may be attained with increased interaction between the partners through phone

talk. Avoidance and attachment anxiety were also interrelated as a demonstration of the similarity between the different insecure attachment styles. Moreover, marital satisfaction was correlated with higher levels of phubbing, anxiety, and avoidance negatively, meaning that relationship well-being is harmed by distracting your spouses with a smartphone and feeling insecure because there are dimensions of insecure attachment.

Table 3

Hierarchical Regression Predicting Marital Satisfaction (N = 300)

Variable	*B*	95% CI		*SE*	β	R^2	ΔR^2
		LL	*UL*				
Step 1							
Constant	14.60***	9.95	19.26	2.35		.05	.05
Gender	0.32	-0.30	0.95	0.32	-.05		
Age	0.08	0.00	0.17	0.04	.09		
Years Married	-0.06	-0.19	0.07	0.06	-.06		
Education	0.26	-0.36	0.89	0.32	.04		
Residence	0.42	-0.27	1.10	0.34	.07		
Daily Smartphone Hours	-0.11	-0.23	0.01	0.06	-.09		
Step 2							
Constant						.15	.10
Partner Phubbing	-0.35***	-0.51	-0.19	0.08	-.32		
Step 3							
Constant						.28	.13
Partner Phubbing	-0.28***	-0.42	-0.14	0.07	-.26		
Attachment Anxiety	-0.21*	-0.39	-0.03	0.09	-.18		
Attachment Avoidance	-0.19*	-0.35	-0.03	0.08	-.17		

Note. *$p < .05$. ***$p < .001$.

Hierarchical regression analysis was used to explore the factors that predict marital satisfaction. In Step 1, a small but statistically significant percentage of the variance in marital happiness was explained by demographic factors (gender, age, years married, education, domicile, and daily smartphone hours; R^2 =.05, ΔF = 2.15, p =.049). While the other demographic variables were not significant predictors, years married had a marginal negative correlation with marital satisfaction (B = −0.06, SE = 0.06, β = −.06, p =.049). After adding partner phubbing to the model in Step 2, it was found to be a strong negative predictor of marital happiness (B = −0.35, SE = 0.08, β = −.32, p<.001), explaining an extra 15% of the variation beyond demographic covariates (ΔR^2 =.10, ΔF = 21.08, p<.001).

Step 3 involved entering partner phubbing coupled with attachment dimensions (attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance). Marital satisfaction was significantly predicted negatively by attachment avoidance (B = −0.19, SE = 0.08, β = −.17, p =.018) and attachment anxiety (B = −0.21, SE = 0.09, β = −.18, p =.021). In the final model, partner phubbing continued to be a significant predictor (B = −0.28, SE = 0.07, β = −.26, p<.001). With an additional 13% of variance described by this step (ΔR^2 =.13, ΔF = 9.64, p<.001), the total explained variance was 28% (R^2 =.28).

Table 4

Moderated Mediation of Partner Phubbing on Marital Satisfaction via Attachment Anxiety, Moderated by Attachment Avoidance (N = 300)

Effect	*SE*	β	*p*	95% CI	
				LL	*UL*
Direct and Path Effects					
a: Partner Phubbing → Attachment Anxiety	0.05		< .001	0.44	0.62
b: Attachment Anxiety → Marital Satisfaction	0.06	-.46	< .001	-0.71	-0.47
c′: Partner Phubbing → Marital Satisfaction	0.07	-.32	< .001	-0.56	-0.28
W: Attachment Avoidance → Marital Satisfaction	0.07	-.21	.002	-0.36	-0.08
X × W: Interaction	0.06	-.15	.005	-0.29	-0.05
Conditional Indirect Effects (a × b)					
Low (−1 SD)	0.05	-.12	.004	-0.28	-0.06
Mean	0.05	-.15	.002	-0.31	-0.11
High (+1 SD)	0.06	-.19	.001	-0.38	-0.13

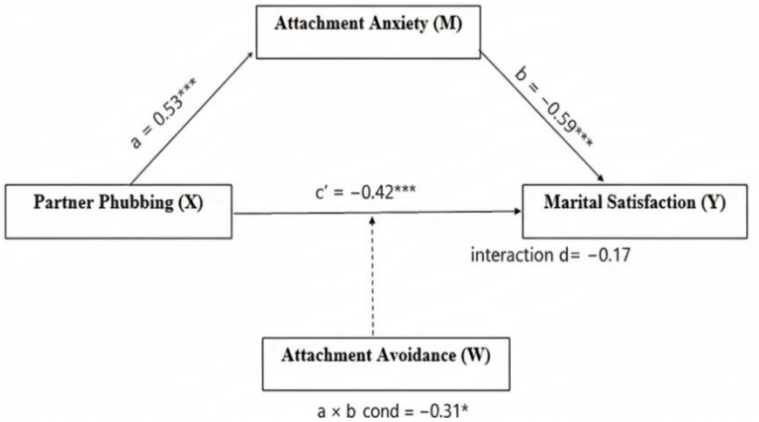
Note. Attachment Anxiety (M), Attachment Avoidance (W), Partner phubbing (X) and Marital Satisfaction (Y). The estimation of the conditional indirect effects was -1 SD, mean, and +1 SD of the moderator.

As shown in Figure 1, moderated mediation analysis (Model 5) showed a positive relationship between partner phubbing and attachment anxiety, which was negatively correlated with marital satisfaction, a finding of partial mediation. Additionally, the mediation between partner phubbing and attachment avoidance was noteworthy, in the sense that the negative impact of phubbing on marital satisfaction was more pronounced in people whose attachment avoidance was higher. Conditional indirect effects also showed that the indirect influence of partner phubbing on marital satisfaction through attachment anxiety was stronger at higher degrees of avoidance in attachment, indicating the moderating effect of

avoidance in the relationship.

Figure 1

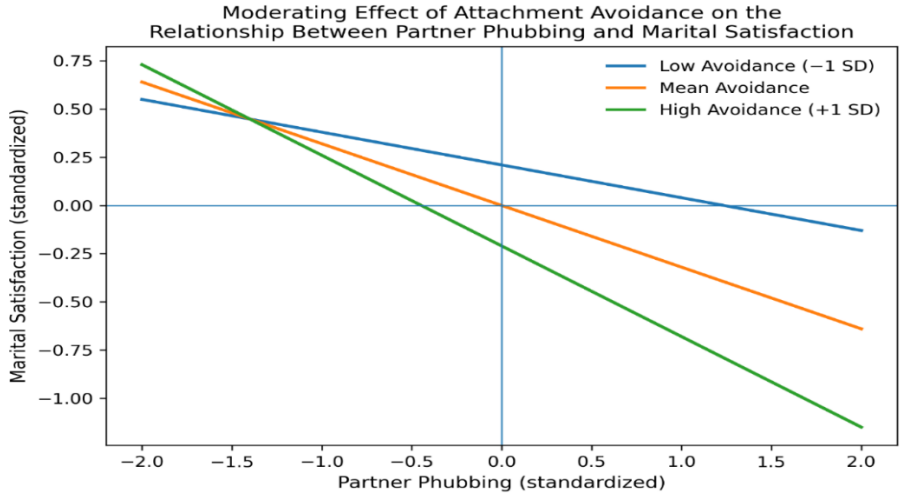
Moderated Mediation Model of Partner Phubbing on Marital Satisfaction via Attachment Anxiety, Moderated by Attachment Avoidance



Note. Solid lines represent direct effects, and the dashed line represents the moderating effect. Path coefficients are standardized regression weights. *p< .05.***p < .001.

Figure 2

Moderated Mediation Model of Partner Phubbing on Marital Satisfaction Moderated by Attachment Avoidance



Note. X = Partner Phubbing; W = Attachment Avoidance; Y = Marital

Satisfaction. Conditional indirect effects are reported at low (−1 SD), mean, and high (+1 SD) levels of the moderator (Attachment Avoidance).

Table 5

Independent Sample t-Test by Gender Differences in Partner Phubbing, Attachment Styles, and Marital Satisfaction (N = 300)

Measure	Male (n = 148)		Female (n = 152)		t (298)	p
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*		
Partner Phubbing	87.05	8.95	86.55	8.85	0.49	.627
Attachment Anxiety	92.20	12.20	92.70	12.40	-0.38	.705
Attachment Avoidance	87.88	11.70	88.36	11.80	-0.42	.674
Marital Satisfaction	15.70	3.50	15.50	3.40	0.50	.616

The findings show that the levels of partner phubbing, attachment anxiety, and attachment avoidance did not differ significantly between men and women. Similarly, there were no significant differences in their marital satisfaction. In general, the issue of gender did not prove to be a major issue of influencing these dynamics of relationships. Therefore, both men and women reported similar experiences of partner phubbing, attachment styles, and marital satisfaction.

Discussion

The study explored the interaction between partner phubbing, attachment orientations, and marital satisfaction in married Generation Z adults in Pakistan. The findings, according to attachment theory, interpersonal acceptance-rejection theory, and compensatory internet use theory, were inclined to support the stated hypotheses and contribute to the growing literature on the effects of digital behaviors on intimate relationships. According to H1, partner phubbing was negatively associated with marital satisfaction. This result adds to the prior body of work which demonstrates that frequent smartphone interruptions lower the level of intimacy, responsiveness, and the quality of relationship overall (McDaniel & Coyne, 2016; Roberts & David, 2016). Phubbing sends microaggressions of neglect, ultimately ruining the illusion of acceptance and intimacy (Beukeboom & Pollmann, 2021). These frequent situations of perceived rejection gradually erode marital satisfaction in the terms of interpersonal acceptance-rejection theory (Rohner, 2016).

The findings also endorsed H2; partner phubbing had a positive relationship with attachment anxiety and avoidance. This means that the insecure attachment tendencies are also causes and not effects of digital intrusions. Anxiously attached people treat such behaviors differently and become more distraught, and avoidant spouses tend to become even more disengaged (Carnelley et al., 2024; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007).This aligns with the latest findings in proving the association between insecure attachment and maladaptive smartphone use and phubbing (Erzen & Tasdemir, 2025). The support provided by the mediation analysis to H3 showed that phubbing and marital satisfaction were negatively correlated in part due to attachment anxiety. That is, common partner phubbing increased the level of attachment anxiety which, in turn, lowered satisfaction. The same mechanisms have been reported in previous studies, where anxious attachment enhanced emotional reactions to phubbing, including jealousy and insecurity, thus reducing relationship quality (David & Roberts, 2021; Han et al., 2025). Attachment theory can be used to describe such patterns because anxious people are particularly attuned to such signals of rejection or neglect.

In line with H4, avoidance of attachment was also found to be a substantial moderator that enhanced the negative relationship between phubbing and marital satisfaction. High avoidance reported more intense losses of satisfaction when they were exposed to phubbing than low avoidance. This result is consistent with the existing dyadic studies which revealed that insecure attachment contributes to the adverse relational effects of technology-based distractions (Mosley & Parker, 2023). The avoidant people can be especially susceptible as they are less likely to choose positive conflict-solving options, which exacerbates distancing impacts of phubbing (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Along with this, the mediation results revealed that individuals high on anxiety and high on avoidance were most negatively affected which underscores the complexity of attaching orientations. Compared to H5, gender differences were not significant. The marital satisfaction and insecure attachment showed the same phubbing between men and women. Even though there is which emphasized on the gender differences in relationship perception and smartphone use (Wang et al., 2025). The results suggested that phubbing is perceived equally between sexes in this cultural and generational context. This convergence can be explained by the mass normalization of smartphone use where men and women have an equal

difficulty in adjusting between the digital and the relational needs. Overall, the study demonstrated that the actions of the partners are not the sole influences that can determine marital satisfaction among the members of the Generation Z but also individual attachments. Partner phubbing directly correlates with negatively affecting the quality of relationships, and attachment anxiety is the only factor that creates and strengthens connections. The comprehensive description of how the daily use of smartphones intersects with the psychological processes on which it builds marital well-being is a combination of attachment theory, interpersonal acceptance-rejection theory, and compensatory internet use theory.

Conclusion

The study showed that partner phubbing can be a major challenge to marital satisfaction in young couples, especially when they have insecurities in the attachment relationships. Attachment anxiety partially mediated the negative impact of phubbing, and attachment avoidance added to the negative impact of phubbing. This suggests that digital distraction is not a problem to be addressed as a single behavior but as a style of relational pressures, which are guided by deeper psychological processes. Since it demonstrates the interaction between the application of technology and the insecurity of attachment, the research is relevant to a developing body of literature on the social cost of digital dependency in intimate relationships. The longitudinal, cross-cultural, and qualitative methods would also be forced to be integrated further in order to reveal such dynamics and develop interventions that may protect the relational well-being in even a more digital future.

Limitations

In the interpretation of the findings, there are some limitations that can be identified. Firstly, a cross-sectional and self-report design limits the potential of causality and is likely to be the social desirability bias. Secondly, in Pakistan, only a sample was picked among Generation Z couples, and this could restrict the generalization of the results to other segments and cultures. Thirdly, the study focused on attachment anxiety and avoidance without further taking into account other psychological or external problems/situations (i.e., conflict resolution styles, cultural values, and socioeconomic pressures) that can also influence the association between phubbing and marital satisfaction. Finally, the

application of quantitative measures alone may have lost the lived and subtle experiences couples may go through which may be supplemented by future mixed-method methods.

Implications

Nevertheless, in spite of these weaknesses, the research provided valuable theoretical and practical insights. Combining both the attachment theory with the new digital habits, the results pointed to the increased relational risks of smartphone usage in intimate relationships due to insecure attachment patterns. The findings implied that the digital boundaries and attachment-related vulnerabilities should be discussed under the marital counseling and relationship education programs (practitioners). Phubbing has adverse effects that can be offset by interventions that lead to the development of safe communication patterns, improvement of emotional regulation, and mindful use of technology. In terms of culture, the study highlighted the importance of culturally contextualizing relational interventions to collectivistic and fast-digitizing cultures, such as Pakistan as well as providing information that could be applicable universally where technology-induced distraction is widespread.

Author Contribution

Bibi Kainat Khilji: conceptualization, methodology, investigation, resources, data curation, formal analysis, software, validation, writing – original draft, visualization, writing – review & editing. **Saima Ambreen**: supervision, writing – review & editing.

Conflict of Interest

The authors of the manuscript have no financial or non-financial conflict of interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

Data Availability Statement

The data associated with this study will be provided by the corresponding author upon request.

Funding Details

No funding has been received for this research.

Generative AI Disclosure Statement

The authors did not used any type of generative artificial intelligence software for this research.

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