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RESEARCH PAPER

Impact of Perceived Boss Phubbing on Employee Work Alienation and Employee Presenteeism through the Mediating Role of Organizational Pride

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the continuous discourse about the potential detrimental effects of global technology usage in the workplace and analyses the adverse outcomes associated with the indispensable use of technology at work. In the future, societies will develop a growing interest in technology and its associated instruments, such as cellphones. This study reveals a growing trend among supervisors, specifically boss phubbing, which refers to the degree to which supervisors are distracted by their smartphones when they are with their subordinates. The study also investigates the effects of boss phubbing on presenteeism and work alienation, with organisational pride acting as a mediator. The quantitative study used confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling on 360 participants to examine phubbing and its effects. Andersen and Garbing's (1988) two-step method was used to identify causal links and evaluate the model. The findings revealed that supervisor phubbing led to a drop in organizational pride, resulting in an increase in presenteeism and work alienation. In addition, Phubbing has a clear impact on presenteeism and work alienation, as evidenced by the outcomes of the study. The study suggests to Implement phubbing education, mobile policy, and "smartphone safe" zones to improve productivity and relationships.

| **KEYWORDS** | Organizational Pride, Phubbing, Presenteeism, Work Alienation |

Introduction

Technology has become so normal that some of us can't imagine life without it. Cell phones have changed daily communication. Technology still hurts life (Y. Li et al., 2022). Smartphone technology causes internet and social media addiction (Weinstein & Lejoyeux, 2010), depressive symptoms (Domoff et al., 2020), disregarding conversation partners (Han et al., 2022), and diminishing the value of social interactions (Anshari et al., 2016), and a decline in human effort (Bravo-Sánchez et al., 2021).

Technology-induced phubbing deteriorates organizational environments, blending multiple addictions and causing significant disruptions (Han et al., 2022). The increase in smartphone use has been linked to workplace interruptions, with employees needing 25–30 minutes to refocus post-interruption (Aljomaa et al., 2016), and 47% experiencing mobile phone disruptions at work. This leads to lost productivity and missed deadlines, costing American companies roughly $588 billion annually (Ronald & Hoekstra, 2011). In 2018, 98.6% of Chinese internet users were mobile, highlighting the global scale of smartphone penetration. Excessive smartphone use impairs performance

and fosters negative workplace phenomena such as "boss phubbing" (Roberts & David, 2016), which damages employee morale and organizational output (Nakamura, 2015). This behavior not only makes employees feel disregarded but also diminishes their work engagement and emotional connections (Abeele et al., 2016; Han et al., 2022; Nakamura, 2015). Survey-based research has detailed the adverse emotional effects of phubbing, such as fear of missing out and reduced self-control (Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas, 2016), with excessive social media use linked to anxiety, sadness, and low self-esteem (Bailey et al., 2022). The less obvious but substantial emotional states of presenteeism and work alienation also affect organizational outcomes, according to this study. Deep-seated emotions cause employee disengagement and mental separation from work.

D'Abate & Eddy,(2007) define presenteeism as working while thinking about personal matters, which costs companies a lot. Per employee, distractions cost the US economy $887 (Vänni et al., 2017). Supervisor rudeness pushes employees toward non-work activities, lowering engagement and productivity (Abdi et al., 2021). Furthermore, phubbing lowers employee self-esteem and job enthusiasm by indicating managerial disinterest, leading to diminished work effort (Harmon & Duffy, 2022).

Work alienation is "the degree to which an individual is disconnected from the world of work" (Hirschfeld et al., 2000). This study suggests that when the boss's impoliteness (phubbing conduct) neglects staff, they would not only abandon their tasks but also feel useless, meaningless, and futile. This causes employees to suffer emotional harm which consequently results in increasing stress (Chu et al., 2021). They grow estranged or alienated from the world of work (Sarros et al., 2002).

Organizational pride reflects employees' admiration and perceived value of their company (Todd et al., 2009), encompassing feelings of joy, significance, dignity, and value (Tracy & Robins, 2007). Phubbing, however, diminishes this pride by making employees feel undervalued, impacting their self-worth and leading to negative emotions and disinterest in the organization (M. Li et al., 2021; Mulki et al., 2015).

This study explores the mediating role of organizational pride in the relationship between supervisor phubbing and its outcomes, highlighting that pride can motivate and foster innovation (Pereira et al., 2021). Supervisor phubbing damages employees' dignity and self-esteem, reducing their sense of worth and pride. This loss of pride leads to mental withdrawal (presenteeism) or disengagement (job alienation). The findings draw on cognitive behavior theory, affective event theory, expectancy violation theory, and appraisal theory of emotions to elucidate the link between phubbing, pride, and employee outcomes.

This study highlights the need to explore how phubbing affects work outcomes like presenteeism and work alienation. Despite mobile phones' benefits in enhancing communication, they disrupt work-life balance, leading to employee distress. Phubbing's passive effects damage well-being and raise questions about countering its negative business impacts, such as decreased engagement and job alienation. Our findings suggest phubbing lowers relationship satisfaction and work investment, harming professional relationships (Roberts & David, 2016).

This study investigates the negative impacts of technology in the technology-reliant banking sector. Despite the benefits outlined by (Bany et al., 2022), the downsides of mobile phones and social networking services remain underexplored. The research emphasizes how excessive mobile phone use, such as browsing news feeds and updating social media during work hours, detracts from employee motivation and engagement

concluding that employer overuse of mobile phones diminishes workforce concentration and productivity.

Banking employees find the industry stressful and highly competitive, attributed to the sensitive nature of financial transactions and the potential for customer dissatisfaction from mishandling. Furthermore, supervisors' disregard and smartphone preoccupation worsen employee strain by ignoring their challenges. This situation negatively impacts both individuals and organizations, making the banking sector a relevant setting for exploring the dynamics between research variables.

Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Perceived phubbing to presenteeism

Presenteeism involves engaging in personal matters while at work, affecting focus and productivity (D'Abate and Eddy, 2007). Non-work activities, though briefly rewarding, contribute to disengagement. Disengaged employees lose job interest, potentially due to phubbing, which diminishes work engagement (Harmon & Duffy, 2022). Phubbing leads to reduced collaboration and willingness to work late (Roberts & David, 2016). Lack of respect or attention during conversations diverts attention to personal matters (Abeele et al., 2016), making it challenging to maintain employee focus amidst distractions like social media (D'Abate & Eddy, 2007).

Expectancy Violation Theory (EVT) by Burgoon & Hale (1988) explains reactions to unexpected breaches of social norms, asserting that deviations in expected communication behaviors lead to evaluations as positive or negative. EVT specifically addresses how unexpected actions, like a boss's phubbing, disrupt established norms, causing perceived violations. These incidents, such as a manager's inattention due to phone use, encourage employees to seek personal space through engaging in personal activities, thereby diminishing work focus and damaging supervisor-subordinate relationships, resulting in a disconnect from work (D'Abate and Eddy, 2007). The hypothesis is drawn as:

H1a: Perceived phubbing has a positive effect on presenteeism.

Perceived Phubbing to Work alienation

Positive emotions enhance employee motivation, whereas negative emotions can decrease engagement and lead to misconduct. Work alienation reflects a psychological disconnection from work and social interactions within work settings, driven by meaningless work environments (Hirschfeld et al., 2000; Y. Li et al., 2022). Negative behaviors from supervisors, such as phubbing, strain employer-employee relationships, impacting employee emotions and contributing to feelings of unease and irrelevance (Abeele et al., 2016; Roberts & David, 2017). This can dampen workplace energy and lead to employee disengagement, feeling insignificant and distanced from their work, which hampers reengagement efforts (Gouthier & Rhein, 2011).

Affective Event Theory (AET) posits that work events influence emotions and performance, leading to actions based on positive or negative emotional responses. This framework details how personal attributes shape responses to work-related incidents, including phubbing by managers. Such behaviors can negatively affect employees' emotions, eliciting feelings of personal attack and emotional distress, thereby straining managerial relationships (Yousaf et al., 2022). The resulting frustration and sense of unproductiveness may lead to workplace alienation. The hypothesis is drawn as:

H1b: Perceived phubbing has a positive impact on work alienation.

Perceived phubbing to organizational pride

Organizational pride, driven by employee enthusiasm and appreciation for their organization's value, can be significantly eroded by negative managerial behaviors, such as supervisor phubbing. With 75% of employees viewing their boss as the main source of stress (Abbajay, 2018), these behaviors contribute to feelings of disrespect and demotivation, diminishing work passion (Mulki et al., 2015). Such negative experiences undermine employees' dignity and self-esteem, leading to emotions like shame, guilt, and embarrassment (Tangney & Dearing, 2003), directly affecting organizational pride.

The appraisal theory of emotion posits that our emotional responses at work derive from how we interpret events, leading to positive or negative reactions (Roberts & David, 2017). Negative perceptions, such as feeling undervalued due to a boss's phubbing, can negatively affect employees' connection to the organization, as well as their pride, self-esteem, and confidence (Wang et al., 2020). Thus, we hypothesized;

H2: Perceived boss phubbing negatively affects organizational pride.

Organizational pride to Presenteeism

Pride boosts employee motivation and creativity, transforming them into proactive problem solvers (Epley et al., 2007). It enhances engagement and innovation, but threats to pride or self-worth can lower motivation and interest in work (Idike et al., 2020), leading to increased engagement in non-productive activities like mobile use or daydreaming (Roberts and David, 2017). Reduced organizational pride is linked to presenteeism, driving disengagement and a shift towards non-work-related activities.

The appraisal theory ties organizational pride to presenteeism, indicating that a negative work environment compromising employees' pride leads to emotional distress and disengagement (Durrah et al., 2021). When pride is undermined, employees may mentally withdraw and engage in unproductive activities, with perceived insults to their honor causing a shift in focus to personal concerns and social media. Thus, a hypothesis is drawn as:

H3a: Organizational pride negatively affects presenteeism.

Organizational Pride to work Alienation:

Challenges to pride and self-esteem impact employees' well-being and lead to work detachment (Mulki et al., 2015). Positive recognition raises self-esteem, whereas failure and criticism reduce it, resulting in disengagement and disconnection from work (Stangor, 2014). Focusing too much on weaknesses reduces motivation and loyalty, causing disassociation from work activities (Sarros et al., 2002), highlighting how organizational pride influences work alienation.

According to Arnold (1954) appraisal theory, how employees understand conditions shapes their reactions, with emotional abuse producing distraction and pain (Keashly & Harvey, 2005). When employees feel their admiration for the company is damaged, they experience neglect and emotional abuse, which leads to a lessened care for their work and organization, eventually resulting in alienation. So, for this, we tend to draw a hypothesis:

H3b: Organisational pride has a negative impact on work alienation.

Phubbing affects Presenteeism and Work alienation through the mediating role of Organizational Pride

Pride and affiliation energize employees, but emotional abuse from bosses' phubbing can deplete this energy by affecting self-worth (Nakamura, 2015). Such mistreatment leads to disengagement (Mulki et al., 2015) and can cause workers to feel isolated and mentally detached from their tasks due to disrespectful behavior (Sarros et al., 2002). The consequent drop in self-esteem fosters disconnection from the organization, culminating in emotional disconnection from work (Harmon and Duffy, 2022).

Supervisor phubbing diminishes employees' sense of belonging and esteem, causing immediate emotional decline and feelings of neglect (Yousaf et al., 2022). This lack of significance can lead to depression and anxiety. To cope, employees may turn to their phones for daydreaming and stress relief, losing interest in work due to distractions like calls and web browsing (Gouthier & Rhein, 2011).

The evaluation of policies responding to supervisor phubbing highlights its linkage to worker presenteeism and job alienation. This behavior erodes employees' self-esteem, leading to feelings of degradation and worthlessness (Gerber & Wheeler, 2009). Such negative self-perception fosters embarrassment and dishonor, prompting disconnection from work due to hindered participation.

Beck's cognitive-behavioral theory posits that job cognition and employee behavior interact via emotion, suggesting that perceptions of the workplace environment influence emotional and behavioral responses (Zhou et al., 2022). Employee psychological factors determine how individuals react to workplace events with safety perceptions having an impact on emotional responses. Positive work experiences boost pleasure and pride, whereas negative conditions provoke feelings of despair and dread, hence linking working conditions to emotional states (Yang et al., 2022).

This study, which is supported by CBT, demonstrates how people's reactions to situations influence their behavior, emotions, and psychology. As a result, how employees perceive boss phubbing affects their emotions, self-esteem, and respect.

Passive reactions to workplace dynamics, such as phubbing by a supervisor, can make employees feel devalued and useless, influencing their behavior, emotions, and psychological well-being. This perspective can undermine pride by inducing feelings of embarrassment and restlessness, resulting in disengagement from work and poor behavior (X. Wang et al., 2017). Employees who have such unfavorable attitudes are more prone to disconnect and devote their time to non-work activities, which leads to workplace alienation. Supervisory behavior provokes these negative emotions, reducing employees' self-confidence and self-esteem and leading to estrangement and distraction from work tasks. The hypotheses derived from the preceding analysis are:

H4a*:* Perceived boss phubbing will increase employee presenteeism through the mediation of organizational pride.

H4b: Perceived boss phubbing will increase work alienation through the mediation of organizational pride.

The aforementioned theories and literature review regarding attitude and behavioral intentions permit us to draw a research framework shown in Figure .1
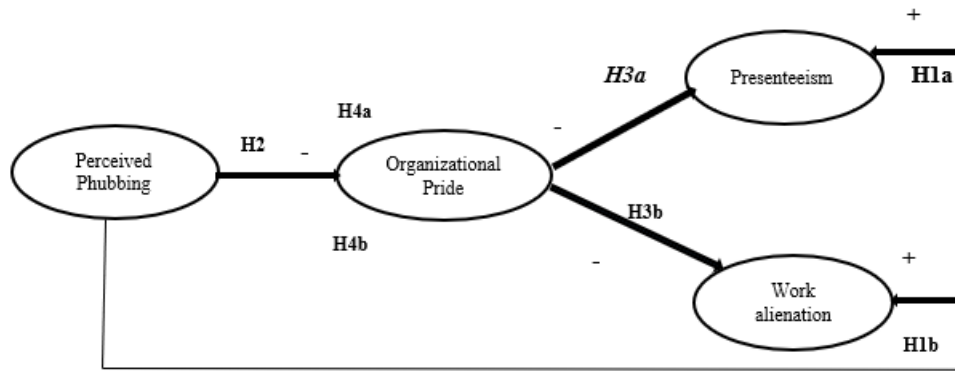
Figure No.1 Framework of the study

Material and Methods

This study utilized a quantitative methodology, recognized for yielding accurate results in social sciences (Chase et al., 2016). It was a cross-sectional survey conducted in natural, non-contrived settings, focusing on individual banking sector employees across four locations as the unit of analysis, using self-reported measures. Given time constraints and access limitations, a targeted population was defined, and data were collected through non-probability sampling, a common approach for estimating populations (Baker et al., 2013). Participation was entirely voluntary, with promises of anonymity and confidentiality to reduce common method bias (CMB), assessment fear, and social desirability. (Podsakoff et al., 2003) developed the survey to psychologically separate items related to perceived phubbing, work alienation, and presenteeism from demographic questions in order to reduce apparent direct relationships between variables. Because there was no risk to participants, approval from the ethical committee was deemed unnecessary. The study's sample size was 360, and 350 complete questionnaires were used to validate the mediated model.

Measures

Koopman et al. (2002) six-item scale measured presenteeism, Roberts and David's (2016) nine-item scale measured phubbing, Gouthier and Rhein's (2011) seven-item scale measured organizational pride, and Nair & Vohra (2009) measured work alienation. Demographics and 5-point Likert scale responses were obtained.

Data Analysis

The purpose of this study was to validate a model that connects perceived phubbing, organizational pride, presenteeism, and job alienation. The data analysis was conducted using SPSS 23 and AMOS 23. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) assessed model fit, while AMOS 23 conducted mediation analysis and Structural Equation Modelling.

Results and Discussion

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1
Descriptive statistics

	Mean	SD	PP	OP	PRE	WA
PP	3.74	1.11	(.95)			
OP	3.11	1.23	-.66**	(.95)		

PRE	3.12	1.29	.24**	-.68**	(.97)	
WA	3.20	1.34	.38**	-.58**	.44**	(.97)

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)
N=320; PP= Perceived Phubbing; OP= Organizational pride; PRE= Presenteeism; WA= Work alienation

Perceived phubbing has a mean of 3.74 and S.D. of 1.11; organizational pride, a mean of 3.11 and S.D. of 1.23; presenteeism, a mean of 3.12 and S.D. of 1.29; and work alienation, a mean of 3.20 and S.D. of 1.34.

Bivariate Correlations

The results of an analysis done using SPSS 23 are shown in Table No. 1. This table summarizes the degree of association between all variables included in the study. Results indicate that all correlations are within the cutoff score

Measurement Model

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is essential before examining causal paths in the structural model to validate the measurement model and confirm variables' factor structure. CFA determines the proposed structure's fit to the data, clarifying the relationship between observed and latent variables.

Table 2
Measurement Model

CMIN	DF	CMIN/DF	CFI	RMR	GFI	AGFI	NFI	TLI	RMSEA
3.811	3	1.27	1.0	.011	.99	.97	.99	.99	.02

Degrees of freedom (df), Root mean square residual (RMR), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) PP= Perceived Phubbing; WA= Work alienation; OP=Organizational pride; PRE= Presenteeism.

This study used various fit indices as indicated in table 2 to assess model fit, all of which met accepted thresholds, thus validating the measurement model.

Convergent Validity and Discriminant Validity

The study assessed construct validity using Convergent and Discriminant Validity tests.

Table 3
Convergent and discriminant validity

	Variables	CR	AVE	DV
1	Perceived phubbing	0.73	0.69	0.83
2	Organizational politics	0.78	0.72	0.84
3	Presenteeism	0.84	0.79	0.88
4	Work alienation	0.85	0.76	0.87

Discriminant Validity was confirmed as the square root of AVE for each construct exceeded inter-construct correlations presented in table 1. Convergent Validity was established with composite reliability greater than 0.7 and AVE above 0.5 for all variables, and AVE being less than composite reliability, ensuring appropriate item loading on constructs.

Path Model Using Structural Equation Modelling

The study utilized SEM to analyze relationships among variables, highlighting its suitability for mediation analysis by examining direct, indirect, and total effects (Hair et al., 2010). SEM's capability to detail pathways involving mediating variables was preferred over other methods for its comprehensive assessment of indirect effects, positioning it as the primary tool for this study's mediation analysis.

Direct Effect Model

Table 4
Standardized direct path coefficients of the hypothesized Model

Hypothesis	Path	Standardized Regression Weights	S.E	P	Supported
H1 (a)	PP→PRE	.46	.06	.000	Yes
(b)	PP→WA	.44	.04	.000	Yes
H2	PP→OP	-.61	.05	.000	Yes
H3 (a)	OP→PRE	-.53	.06	.000	Yes
(b)	OP→WA	-.66	.04	.00	Yes

The study confirmed that perceived phubbing increases presenteeism (H1a; B= .46, P<.001) and work alienation (H1b; B=.44, P<.001), while negatively impacting organizational pride (H2; B=-.61, P<.001). Organizational pride was found to significantly reduce presenteeism (H3a; B= -.53, P<.001) and work alienation (H3b; B= -.66, P<.001), supporting all hypothesized relationships.

Mediation Model Results

Table 5
Results of Mediation Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Hypothesized relation	Total effects	Direct Effects	Indirect Effects	Supported
H4a	PP→OP→PRE	.49	.28	.21	Yes
H4b	PP→OP→WA	.51	.32	.19	Yes

Table 6
Model Fit Indices of Mediation Model

Model	X²	DF	X²/DF	CFI	RMR	GFI	NFI	TLI	RMSEA
1. Direct path from PP to outcomes	601.50	192	3.1	.96	.07	.88	.95	.95	.07
2. Direct & indirect paths from PP to outcomes through OP	1039.8	365	2.8	.97	.07	.87	.95	.94	.07

Table 5 shows a partial mediating effect of organizational politics on the relationships between perceived phubbing with presenteeism and work alienation. Table 6 confirms the mediation model's acceptance with values: CMIN/DF = 2.8, CFI = .97, RMR = .07, GFI = .87, NFI = .95, TLI = .94, and RMSEA = .07, indicating the model's overall acceptability.

Results of Hypothesis Testing

Seven hypotheses were tested in this study. The current study hypothesized that perceived phubbing tends to increase presenteeism and work alienation following a mediating role of organizational pride. All the hypotheses were accepted.

Conclusion

The study validates that perceived phubbing significantly influences presenteeism (H1a; B=.46, P<.001) and work alienation (H1b; B=.44, P<.001), while negatively affecting organizational pride (H2; B=-.61, P<.001). Organizational pride is inversely related to both presenteeism (H3a; B=-.53, P<.001) and work alienation (H3b; B=-.66, P<.001), establishing its mediating role (H4a and H4b). The findings highlight the detrimental impact of excessive cellular phone use in the workplace on relationship quality and psychological well-being, urging further research on workplace phubbing to promote technology's functional use, benefitting individuals and organizations.

Study implications

Past research highlights both the benefits and drawbacks of technology, particularly smartphones, which can negatively impact individuals and work environments. Notable issues include social media addiction, and health problems such as carpal tunnel syndrome, bulging discs, stress, impaired vision, sleep disorders, and depression (Beranuy et al., 2009). This study adds to the limited literature on smartphones' disruptive effects on workplace interactions. The study underscores the need for aligning supervisor-subordinate interactions to mitigate phubbing's negative impacts on workplace dynamics. Educating managers about phubbing's adverse effects can enhance understanding of employee reactions, fostering healthier employer-employee relationships and boosting productivity and creativity while reducing conflicts. Implementing policies to limit mobile device use during key interactions and establishing clear mobile usage guidelines are recommended. "Mobile policies" should detail usage rules, security measures, and penalties for violations. Additionally, creating "smartphone safe" zones and scheduling designated "smartphone breaks" can balance cellphone use in the workplace (Roberts and David, 2016).

Recommendations

The data from a cross-sectional study lacks clarity on the causal relationship between variables due to simultaneous collection. Future research could explore these variables using qualitative or longitudinal methods, recommended for observing behavioral changes over time (Hasan & Kashif, 2021). Moreover, as the data was exclusively from the banking sector, expanding future studies to include various sectors could improve the findings' generalizability.

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