



EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTAL PHUBBING, EMOTION REGULATION, AND SOCIAL COMPETENCE AMONG EARLY ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract

The increasing use of smartphones has transformed patterns of family communication and interaction, giving rise to parental phubbing, a phenomenon in which parents prioritize smartphone use over direct engagement with their children. Such behavior may disrupt parent–child communication and negatively influence adolescent’s emotional and social development. The present study examined the relationships among parental phubbing, emotion regulation, and social competence among early adolescents. A quantitative cross-sectional correlational research design was employed. The sample consisted of 150 early adolescents (79 males and 71 females), aged 10 to 14 years, recruited through convenience sampling from government and private schools in Faisalabad, Pakistan. Data were collected using the Parental Phubbing Scale, the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire for Children and Adolescents, and the Children’s Social Competence Scale. Descriptive statistics, Pearson product–moment correlation analyses, and simple linear regression analyses were performed using SPSS Version 26. The findings revealed a significant negative relationship between parental phubbing and emotion regulation ($r = -.876, p < .001$), as well as between parental phubbing and social competence ($r = -.830, p < .001$). A significant positive relationship was found between emotion regulation and social competence ($r = .951, p < .001$). Furthermore, parental phubbing significantly predicted emotion regulation ($\beta = -.876, p < .001$) and social competence ($\beta = -.830, p < .001$). The findings suggest that higher levels of parental smartphone distraction are associated with poorer emotional regulation and lower social competence among adolescents. The study highlights the importance of mindful parental technology use and effective parent–child communication in promoting positive emotional and social developmental

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1. Introduction

The rapid advancement of digital technology has transformed the ways in which individuals communicate, interact, and maintain relationships. Among these technological innovations, smartphones have become an integral part of daily life, providing continuous access to communication, information, and entertainment. While smartphones offer numerous benefits, concerns have emerged regarding their influence on interpersonal relationships, particularly within family environments. Excessive smartphone use has the potential to interfere with face-to-face interactions, reduce communication quality, and limit emotional engagement among family members (Pancani et al., 2021). Consequently, researchers have increasingly focused on understanding how technology-related behaviors influence children's emotional and social development.

One emerging phenomenon in this context is parental phubbing. The term phubbing refers to the act of ignoring another person during social interaction in favor of using a smartphone. When such behavior occurs within parent-child interactions, it is referred to as parental phubbing (Pancani et al., 2021). Although parental smartphone use is often perceived as harmless or routine, repeated experiences of parental distraction may communicate disinterest, neglect, or emotional unavailability to children. Such experiences may negatively affect children's perceptions of parental support and the quality of family relationships.

The family constitutes one of the most influential contexts for child and adolescent development. According to ecological systems theory, parents play a critical role in shaping developmental outcomes by providing emotional support, guidance, supervision, and opportunities for social learning (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Through daily interactions, children learn how to express emotions, develop interpersonal skills, solve problems, and navigate social situations. Therefore, parental behaviors that interfere with effective communication may hinder important developmental processes. In contemporary family environments, parental phubbing has emerged as a potential threat to healthy parent-child interactions because it may reduce the frequency and quality of meaningful communication (Pancani et al., 2021; Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Early adolescence, generally defined as the period between 10 and 14 years of age, represents a critical stage of development characterized by significant biological, cognitive, emotional, and social changes (Steinberg, 2017). During this period, adolescents seek greater autonomy while continuing to rely on parents for emotional support and guidance. Positive parent-child relationships contribute to psychological well-being,

emotional adjustment, and successful social functioning. Conversely, disruptions in communication and reduced parental involvement may increase adolescent's vulnerability to emotional and interpersonal difficulties (Steinberg, 2017). As smartphone use continues to increase among adults, examining the effects of parental smartphone-related behaviors on adolescent's development has become increasingly important.

Parental phubbing may be understood through the lens of social exclusion theory, which proposes that individuals experience psychological distress when they perceive themselves as ignored, rejected, or excluded by significant others (Williams, 2009). Adolescents who repeatedly experience parental phubbing may perceive themselves as less valued or less important than their parents' digital activities. Such perceptions may weaken emotional bonds, undermine feelings of belongingness, and negatively influence emotional and social adjustment. Research suggests that reduced parental responsiveness and limited parent-child engagement are associated with poorer developmental outcomes among adolescents (Morris et al., 2017; Steinberg, 2017).

One developmental domain that may be particularly vulnerable to parental phubbing is emotion regulation. Emotion regulation refers to the processes through which individuals monitor, evaluate, and modify emotional experiences and expressions in order to achieve adaptive goals (Gross, 2015). Effective emotion regulation enables adolescents to cope with stress, manage negative emotions, and maintain healthy interpersonal relationships. Family interactions play a central role in the development of emotion regulation because parents serve as important models of emotional expression and coping strategies (Morris et al., 2017). Supportive and responsive parenting promotes adaptive emotional development, whereas emotionally unavailable interactions may increase vulnerability to emotional dysregulation.

Research has consistently demonstrated that parental support and emotional availability play an important role in fostering healthy emotional functioning among adolescents. When parents provide guidance, validation, and emotional responsiveness, adolescents are more likely to develop adaptive emotional coping strategies and effective self-regulation skills (Morris et al., 2017). In contrast, disruptions in parent-child communication may reduce opportunities for emotional learning and support, potentially contributing to difficulties in regulating emotions (Gross, 2015). Consequently, parental phubbing may represent an important factor associated with adolescent's emotional functioning.

Another important developmental outcome influenced by family relationships is social competence. Social competence refers to the ability to interact effectively with others, establish positive relationships, communicate appropriately, resolve interpersonal conflicts, and adapt successfully to social environments (Rose-Krasnor, 1997). Socially competent adolescents tend to demonstrate better peer relationships, greater academic

adjustment, and higher levels of psychological well-being. Parents contribute significantly to the development of social competence by modeling empathy, cooperation, communication skills, and pro-social behavior. Therefore, reduced parent–child engagement resulting from parental phubbing may limit opportunities for social learning and interpersonal development (Rose-Krasnor, 1997).

The relationship between emotion regulation and social competence has received considerable attention in developmental psychology because both constructs play a fundamental role in adolescent’s adjustment and well-being. Emotion regulation enables individuals to respond appropriately to social situations, manage interpersonal conflicts, and maintain positive relationships. Adolescents who possess effective emotion regulation abilities are generally more capable of displaying empathy, cooperation, pro-social behavior, and adaptive communication skills (Eisenberg et al., 2010). Conversely, difficulties in regulating emotions may contribute to peer rejection, social withdrawal, and interpersonal difficulties.

Previous research has consistently demonstrated a positive association between emotion regulation and social competence. Adolescents who effectively regulate their emotions tend to exhibit greater interpersonal effectiveness and social adjustment (Compas et al., 2017). Effective emotion regulation facilitates adaptive responses to stressful situations and enhances individuals’ ability to navigate complex social environments. Consequently, emotion regulation is considered an important foundation for the development and maintenance of social competence during adolescence (Rose-Krasnor, 1997; Eisenberg et al., 2010).

The relationship among parental phubbing, emotion regulation, and social competence is particularly important because family interactions serve as a primary context for emotional and social learning. When parents are emotionally available and responsive, adolescents receive opportunities to develop emotional understanding, interpersonal skills, and adaptive coping strategies. However, frequent parental smartphone distraction may reduce the quality of parent–child interactions and limit opportunities for emotional guidance and social learning. Consequently, parental phubbing may negatively influence adolescent’s emotional functioning, which may ultimately affect their social competence and interpersonal adjustment (Morris et al., 2017; Pancani et al., 2021).

Although research on parental phubbing has increased substantially during the past decade, several gaps remain in the existing literature. Existing studies have primarily focused on psychological outcomes such as depression, anxiety, loneliness, and self-esteem, while comparatively less attention has been devoted to the simultaneous examination of emotion regulation and social competence among adolescents. Furthermore, much of the available evidence has been generated in Western contexts,

limiting the generalizability of findings across different cultural settings. Parenting practices, family communication patterns, and technology usage behaviors may vary considerably across societies, making it important to investigate these relationships within diverse cultural environments.

In Pakistan, smartphone use has increased rapidly among adults and adolescents, resulting in significant changes in family communication dynamics. Despite the growing integration of digital technologies into everyday life, limited empirical research has examined how parental smartphone-related behaviors influence adolescent's emotional and social development. Furthermore, few studies have explored parental phubbing within the context of Pakistani family systems, where close family relationships and parental involvement are traditionally emphasized. Examining these associations within the local context may therefore provide culturally relevant insights into the developmental consequences of parental phubbing.

The present study seeks to address these gaps by examining the relationships among parental phubbing, emotion regulation, and social competence among early adolescents in Faisalabad, Pakistan. Specifically, the study investigates whether parental phubbing is associated with emotion regulation and social competence and whether parental phubbing significantly predicts these developmental outcomes. By focusing on early adolescents, the study contributes to a better understanding of how technology-mediated disruptions in parent-child communication may influence emotional and social adjustment during a critical developmental period.

1.1. Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the relationship between parental phubbing, emotion regulation and social competence among early adolescents.
2. To investigate the predictive role of parental phubbing on emotion regulation among early adolescents.
3. To investigate the predictive role of parental phubbing on social competence among early adolescents.

1.2. Hypotheses of the Study

1. Parental phubbing is significantly associated with emotion regulation and social competence among early adolescents.
2. Parental phubbing significantly predicts emotion regulation among early adolescents.
3. Parental phubbing significantly predicts social competence among early adolescents.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Design

The present study employed a quantitative cross-sectional correlational research design to examine the relationships among parental phubbing, emotion regulation, and social competence among early adolescents. A correlational design was considered appropriate because the study aimed to investigate the direction and strength of associations among the study variables without manipulating any conditions. Furthermore, simple linear regression analyses were conducted to determine the predictive role of parental phubbing on emotion regulation and social competence.

2.2. Participants

The sample consisted of 150 early adolescents recruited from government and private schools in Faisalabad, Pakistan. Participants were selected through a convenience sampling technique. The age of the participants ranged from 10 to 14 years ($M = 12.29$, $SD = 1.34$). The sample included 79 males (52.7%) and 71 females (47.3%) enrolled in Grades 5 to 9. Participants who fell within the specified age range and voluntarily agreed to participate in the study were included. Adolescents who provided incomplete responses were excluded from the final analysis.

2.3. Sampling Technique

A convenience sampling technique was used to recruit participants from government and private schools in Faisalabad. This non-probability sampling method was selected due to its practicality, accessibility, and suitability for collecting data from the target population within the available time and resources.

2.4. Measures

2.4.1. Demographic Information Form

A demographic information form was developed by the researcher to obtain information regarding participants' age, gender, grade level, school type, family system, birth order, number of siblings, and parents' educational level.

2.4.2. Parental Phubbing Scale (PPS)

Parental phubbing was assessed using the Parental Phubbing Scale (PPS) developed by Pancani et al. (2021). The scale consists of 14 items measuring adolescent's perceptions of parental smartphone distraction during parent-child interactions. Participants respond to each item on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always). Higher scores indicate greater levels of perceived parental phubbing. The scale demonstrated excellent internal consistency in the present study ($\alpha = .983$).

2.4.3. Emotion Regulation Questionnaire for Children and Adolescents (ERQ-CA)

Emotion regulation was measured using the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire for Children and Adolescents (ERQ-CA) developed by Gullone and Taffe (2012). The scale consists of 10 items assessing adolescent's ability to regulate emotional experiences and emotional expression. Responses are rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1

(Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Higher scores reflect better emotion regulation abilities. In the current study, the scale demonstrated excellent reliability ($\alpha = .978$).

2.4.4. Children's Social Competence Scale (CSCS)

Social competence was measured using the Children's Social Competence Scale (CSCS) developed by Nuñez (2011). The scale consists of 12 items assessing social skills, social-emotional competence, and self-esteem. Responses are recorded on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Never) to 4 (Frequently). Higher scores indicate greater levels of social competence. In the present study, the scale demonstrated excellent internal consistency ($\alpha = .969$).

2.5. Procedure

Prior to data collection, formal permission was obtained from the administrations of the participating schools. The objectives and procedures of the study were explained to school authorities, parents, and students. Written informed consent was obtained from parents or guardians, while assent was obtained from the participating adolescents.

Data were collected during the academic year 2026 from government and private schools in Faisalabad. Participants completed the demographic information form and the study questionnaires in classroom settings under the supervision of the researcher. Before administration, participants were informed about the purpose of the study and assured that there were no right or wrong answers. They were encouraged to respond honestly to all items. The average completion time for the questionnaire package was approximately 15-20 minutes.

2.6. Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to established ethical guidelines for psychological research. Participation was entirely voluntary, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without penalty. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured throughout the research process. No personally identifying information was collected, and all data were used solely for academic and research purposes. The collected data were stored securely and were accessible only to the researcher.

2.7. Statistical Analysis

Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 26. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, skewness, and kurtosis, were computed to summarize participant characteristics and study variables. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated to assess the internal consistency of the instruments. Pearson product moment correlation analyses were conducted to examine the relationships among parental phubbing, emotion regulation, and social competence. In addition, simple linear regression analyses were performed to investigate the predictive role of parental phubbing on emotion regulation and social competence. Statistical significance was determined at the .05 level.

3. Results

The present study examined the relationships among parental phubbing, emotion regulation, and social competence among early adolescents. Descriptive statistics, reliability analyses, Pearson product moment correlation analyses, and simple linear regression analyses were conducted to test the study hypotheses.

3.1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 150)

Variable	Category	<i>f</i>	%
Gender	Male	79	52.7
	Female	71	47.3
School Type	Government	111	74.0
	Private	39	26.0
Grade	Grade 5	35	23.3
	Grade 6	29	19.3
	Grade 7	29	19.3
	Grade 8	36	24.0
	Grade 9	21	14.0
Family System	Nuclear	61	40.7
	Joint	89	59.3
Number of Siblings	None	17	11.3
	1–2	33	22.0
	3–4	67	44.7
	5 or More	33	22.0

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the participants. The sample consisted of 150 early adolescents, including 79 males (52.7%) and 71 females (47.3%). Most participants attended government schools (74.0%), while 26.0% were enrolled in private schools. The majority belonged to joint family systems (59.3%), and the largest proportion of participants reported having three to four siblings (44.7%).

3.2. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were computed to examine the distributional characteristics of the study variables. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were computed to determine the internal consistency of the study instruments.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables (N = 150)

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Skewness	Cronbach's α
Parental Phubbing	50.57	16.79	-0.87	.983
Emotion Regulation	31.49	11.28	-0.52	.978
Social Competence	30.47	11.31	-0.51	.969

The results revealed that the skewness and kurtosis values for all study variables fell within acceptable limits, indicating that the data were approximately normally

distributed and suitable for parametric analyses. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged from .969 to .983, indicating high reliability of the measures used in the study.

3.3. Correlation Analysis

Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was performed to examine the relationships among parental phubbing, emotion regulation, and social competence.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix for Study Variables (N = 150)

Variables	1	2	3
1. Parental Phubbing	—		
2. Emotion Regulation	-.876***	—	
3. Social Competence	-.830***	.951***	—

*** $p < .001$

The results revealed a significant negative relationship between parental phubbing and emotion regulation, $r(148) = -.876, p < .001$, indicating that higher levels of parental phubbing were associated with lower levels of emotion regulation. Thus, Hypothesis 1 was supported. A significant negative relationship was also found between parental phubbing and social competence, $r(148) = -.830, p < .001$, suggesting that adolescents who perceived higher levels of parental phubbing reported lower levels of social competence. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was supported. Furthermore, emotion regulation was significantly and positively associated with social competence, $r(148) = .951, p < .001$. This finding suggests that adolescents with better emotion regulation abilities tended to exhibit higher levels of social competence.

4. Regression Analysis

4.1. Predictive Role of Parental Phubbing on Emotion Regulation

A simple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine whether parental phubbing significantly predicted emotion regulation among early adolescents.

Table 4: Simple Linear Regression Predicting Emotion Regulation from Parental Phubbing (N = 150)

Variable	<i>B</i>	β	<i>SE</i>
Constant	61.28***	—	1.39
Parental Phubbing	-0.59***	-.876	.03
R^2	.767		
F	486.16***		

The regression model was statistically significant, $F(1, 148) = 486.16, p < .001$, explaining 76.7% of the variance in emotion regulation. Parental phubbing emerged as a significant negative predictor of emotion regulation ($\beta = -.876, p < .001$). These findings indicate that increased parental phubbing significantly contributed to lower levels of emotion regulation among early adolescents. Therefore,

4.2. Predictive Role of Parental Phubbing on Social Competence

A second simple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine whether parental phubbing significantly predicted social competence among early adolescents.

Table 5: Simple Linear Regression Predicting Social Competence from Parental Phubbing ($N = 150$)

Variable	<i>B</i>	β	<i>SE</i>
Constant	58.79***	—	1.74
Parental Phubbing	-0.56***	-.830	.03
R^2	.688		
F	326.70***		

*** $p < .001$

A second regression analysis indicated that parental phubbing significantly predicted social competence, explaining 68.8% of the variance ($R^2 = .688$, $F = 326.70$, $p < .001$). Parental phubbing was a significant negative predictor of social competence ($\beta = -.830$, $p < .001$).

5. Discussion

The present study examined the relationships among parental phubbing, emotion regulation, and social competence among early adolescents. Furthermore, the predictive role of parental phubbing on emotion regulation and social competence was investigated. The findings supported all proposed hypotheses and demonstrated that parental phubbing was significantly associated with poorer emotional and social functioning among adolescents.

The first hypothesis proposed a negative relationship between parental phubbing and emotion regulation. The findings supported this hypothesis, indicating that adolescents who perceived higher levels of parental phubbing reported lower levels of emotion regulation. This finding is consistent with previous literature suggesting that parental responsiveness and emotional availability are essential for the development of adaptive emotional competencies (Gross, 2015; Morris et al., 2017). When parents become distracted by smartphones during interactions with their children, opportunities for emotional communication, guidance, and support may be reduced. Consequently, adolescents may experience difficulties in understanding, managing, and expressing their emotions effectively. The findings are also consistent with research indicating that parental phubbing is associated with emotional insecurity, psychological distress, and poorer emotional adjustment among adolescents (Wang et al., 2022).

The second hypothesis stated that parental phubbing would be negatively associated with social competence. The findings confirmed this hypothesis by demonstrating that adolescents who experienced greater parental phubbing reported lower

levels of social competence. Social competence develops through social learning experiences, communication, and interpersonal interactions within family environments. Parents serve as primary role models who teach children how to communicate effectively, express empathy, resolve conflicts, and develop positive social relationships. Therefore, when parent–child interactions are repeatedly interrupted by smartphone use, opportunities for social learning may diminish. These findings support previous evidence suggesting that parental phubbing negatively influences children's social-emotional adjustment and interpersonal functioning (Ding et al., 2023). Adolescents who perceive parental inattentiveness may consequently experience difficulties in developing effective social skills and maintaining healthy relationships with others.

The third hypothesis proposed a positive relationship between emotion regulation and social competence. The findings supported this hypothesis and revealed a strong positive association between the two variables. This result is consistent with developmental research emphasizing that effective emotion regulation contributes significantly to successful social functioning (Eisenberg et al., 2010; Compas et al., 2017). Adolescents who can regulate emotional experiences appropriately are generally better equipped to manage interpersonal conflicts, communicate effectively, and maintain positive peer relationships. Conversely, poor emotion regulation may increase emotional reactivity and interfere with social interactions. Therefore, the strong association observed in the present study highlights the importance of emotional competencies in facilitating social adjustment during adolescence.

The study also examined whether parental phubbing significantly predicted emotion regulation among early adolescents. The results indicated that parental phubbing emerged as a significant negative predictor of emotion regulation and accounted for a substantial proportion of variance in adolescent's emotional functioning. This finding suggests that parental smartphone distraction may represent an important family-related risk factor affecting emotional development. Consistent with family systems and socialization perspectives, adolescents rely on supportive parent child interactions to learn adaptive emotional coping strategies (Morris et al., 2017). When parental attention is repeatedly diverted toward smartphones, emotional support and communication opportunities may be reduced, thereby limiting adolescent's emotional development.

Similarly, parental phubbing significantly predicted social competence among early adolescents. The findings demonstrated that increased parental phubbing was associated with lower levels of social competence. This result further emphasizes the importance of parental engagement in promoting adolescent's interpersonal development. Meaningful communication and consistent parental involvement provide opportunities for adolescents to acquire social skills, empathy, cooperation, and problem-solving abilities. In contrast, frequent smartphone-related interruptions may weaken parent–child

relationships and reduce opportunities for social learning. These findings are consistent with previous studies indicating that parental phubbing is linked to poorer psychosocial adjustment and reduced social-emotional well-being among children and adolescents (Ding et al., 2023).

The findings of the present study may also be understood within the framework of social exclusion theory (Williams, 2009). According to this perspective, individuals experience psychological discomfort when they perceive themselves as ignored or excluded by significant others. Adolescents who repeatedly experience parental phubbing may interpret such behavior as a form of rejection or neglect. These perceptions may undermine emotional security and reduce opportunities for healthy communication and social development. Consequently, parental phubbing may negatively influence both emotion regulation and social competence.

The findings are particularly important within the Pakistani context, where family cohesion, parental involvement, and close interpersonal relationships are highly valued. As smartphone use continues to increase across families, parents may unintentionally reduce the quality of interactions with their children. The present study highlights the need to promote balanced technology use and encourage meaningful parent-child communication to support healthy emotional and social development among adolescents.

Overall, the findings suggest that parental phubbing is not merely a technology-related behavior but a family interaction pattern with significant implications for adolescent's emotional and social adjustment. Reducing smartphone-related distractions during parent-child interactions may therefore contribute to healthier emotional regulation and stronger social competence among early adolescents.

6. Implications of the Study

The findings of the present study have important theoretical, practical, educational, and clinical implications. Theoretically, the study contributes to the growing body of literature on parental phubbing by highlighting its association with emotion regulation and social competence among early adolescents. The findings extend existing knowledge by demonstrating that parental smartphone distraction is linked not only with emotional functioning but also with adolescent's social development.

Practically, the study underscores the importance of mindful smartphone use among parents. Parents should be encouraged to minimize smartphone-related distractions during interactions with their children and engage in meaningful face-to-face communication. Increased parental responsiveness may facilitate the development of healthier emotional and social competencies among adolescents.

From an educational perspective, schools may organize awareness programs, seminars, and parent-training workshops to educate parents about the potential impact of excessive smartphone use on adolescent development. School psychologists and

counselors may also use these findings to design interventions aimed at improving parent–child communication and adolescent’s socio-emotional adjustment.

Clinically, the findings suggest that mental health professionals should consider parental technology-use patterns when assessing emotional and behavioral difficulties among adolescents. Family-based interventions focusing on communication skills and healthy technology habits may help strengthen emotional regulation and social competence.

7. Limitations of the Study

Despite its contributions, the present study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings.

First, the study employed a cross-sectional research design, which limits the ability to establish causal relationships among parental phubbing, emotion regulation, and social competence. Future longitudinal studies may provide a clearer understanding of developmental pathways among these variables.

Second, data were collected through self-report measures, which may be subject to social desirability bias and subjective interpretations. Participants’ responses may not fully reflect actual parental smartphone use or behavioral patterns.

Third, the study utilized a convenience sampling technique, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to broader adolescent populations. Participants were recruited from selected schools in Faisalabad, and therefore the results may not represent adolescents from other geographical regions or cultural settings.

Fourth, the study relied exclusively on adolescent’s perceptions of parental phubbing rather than direct assessments of parents’ smartphone use behaviors. Future studies may benefit from incorporating multiple sources of information, including parent reports and observational methods.

Finally, the study focused specifically on parental phubbing, emotion regulation, and social competence. Other potentially influential factors, such as parenting styles, family functioning, attachment patterns, peer relationships, and psychological well-being, were not examined and may contribute to adolescent’s emotional and social development.

8. Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the findings and limitations of the present study, several recommendations are proposed for future research.

1. Future studies should employ longitudinal designs to examine causal relationships among parental phubbing, emotion regulation, and social competence over time.
2. Researchers should investigate potential mediating and moderating variables, such as parent child attachment, family communication, self-esteem, resilience, and parenting styles.

3. Future studies should include larger and more diverse samples drawn from different regions of Pakistan to enhance the generalizability of findings.
4. Comparative research involving different developmental stages may provide a deeper understanding of age-related differences in the effects of parental phubbing.
5. Multi-informant approaches incorporating parent reports, teacher ratings, and observational assessments are recommended to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of adolescent's emotional and social functioning.

9. Conclusion

The present study investigated the relationships among parental phubbing, emotion regulation, and social competence among early adolescents. The findings revealed that parental phubbing was negatively associated with emotion regulation and social competence, whereas emotion regulation was positively associated with social competence. Furthermore, parental phubbing significantly predicted both emotion regulation and social competence among early adolescents. The findings suggest that parental smartphone distraction may have important implications for adolescents' emotional and social development. As smartphone use continues to increase in contemporary family environments, promoting mindful technology use and strengthening parent child communication may be essential for fostering healthy emotional regulation and social competence among adolescents. The study highlights the importance of parental attentiveness and engagement in supporting positive developmental outcomes during early adolescence.

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