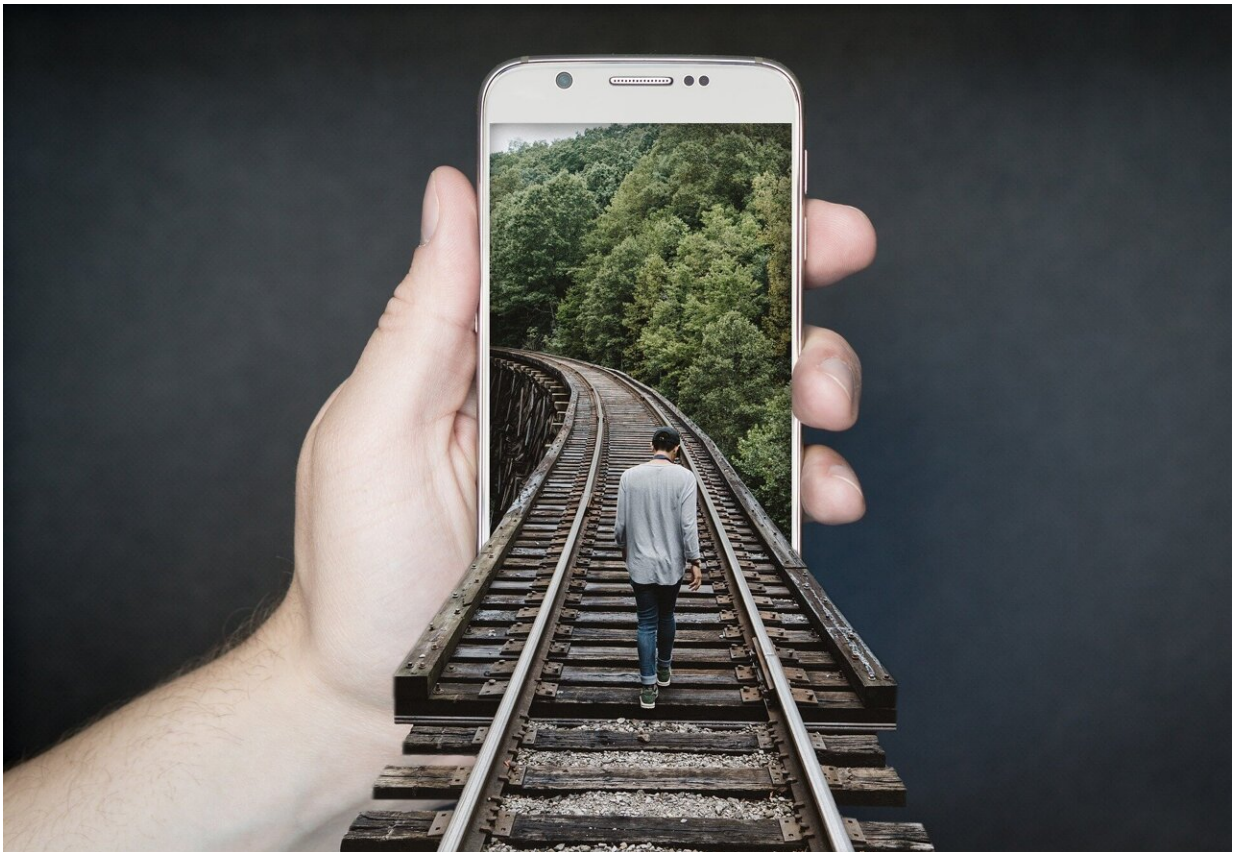


Prioritizing your phone over your partner affects creativity in the workplace for women

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Focusing attention on your mobile phone instead of your partner doesn't just strain your relationship—it also affects women's creativity in the workplace, caution researchers from the Universities of Bath, Aston, and

IESE Business School.

The study sheds light on the negative effects of 'phubbing', the idea of snubbing someone in favor of your phone, which is known for its detrimental impact on relationships and mental well-being. Now, the study of working couples in the US points to repercussions in the workplace as well, but only for the female partner.

"Phone usage is eroding the connection between couples and hindering their capacity to discuss and address stresses and concerns that are playing on their mind," said Professor Yasin Rofcanin from the University of Bath's Future of Work research center.

"Supportive interactions at home have a positive crossover effect on partners, enhancing their creativity in the workplace. However, this spiral of support is lost when individuals are absorbed in phone scrolling, missing out on these valuable moments of connection."

Analysis of diary entries spanning 15 working days from 65 [full-time](#), dual-income heterosexual couples with children in the US reveals that phone use is disrupting [social interaction](#) and the support couples provide each other in balancing work and [family responsibilities](#).

Previous [research](#) from a similar study setup shows that supportive interactions with co-workers extend to the [home environment](#), benefiting partners in loving relationships and contributing to enhanced creativity in the workplace.

However, the effect only works for women. Researchers say women seem more adept at translating this support into workplace creativity, possibly because expectations on women to juggle home and work push them to pursue support networks and seek out family-friendly work policies.

The researchers say that the support spiral enables women to be more resourceful at work—to engage in proactive 'job-crafting' that enhances [job satisfaction](#), such as seeking out new challenges, building stronger relationships with colleagues, and choosing a positive perspective on their role, which all contribute to enhanced creativity at work.

"These findings around phubbing hold particular relevance in the post-pandemic era, where hybrid working arrangements have become increasingly prevalent," said Professor Rofcanin. "As organizations navigate this new landscape, it's crucial to consider the impact of home dynamics on employee productivity and well-being."

The researchers hope that the findings will contribute to employer thinking on boundaries around using technology for working out of hours and that it will underline the importance of policies that [support](#) work-family balance, such as flexible working schedules.

Dr. Siqi Wang from Aston Business School said, "In fostering a supportive work-family environment, close collaboration between HR managers and employees' first-line supervisors is essential. Employers can benefit from work-family supervisor training programs emphasizing communication and limiting technology use, particularly for work purposes."

The findings are [published](#) in the *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*.

More information: Siqi Wang et al, The more you connect, the less you connect: An examination of the role of phubbing at home and job crafting in the crossover and spillover effects of work–family spousal support on employee creativity, *Journal of Occupational and*

Organizational Psychology (2024). [DOI: 10.1111/joop.12503](https://doi.org/10.1111/joop.12503)

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