

## When Phones Take Over: How Self-Management Bridges the Gap to Communication

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INFO	ABSTRACT
<b>Article History</b> Received: 2024-12-30 Revised: 2025-03-06 Accepted: 2025-04-30	In the contemporary digital era, the pervasive use of smartphones, particularly among Generation Z, has become a prevalent phenomenon across various settings, including professional environments. One of the deleterious effects of this phenomenon is what has been termed "phone snubbing behavior" (PSB), which is defined as the tendency to ignore in-person social interactions due to excessive focus on mobile devices. The objective of this research is to validate the mediating function of self-management or self-control on the relationship PSB, which is defined as the excessive use of smartphones during social interactions that ultimately impedes communication among Generation Z employees in the West Sulawesi government among the selected population. It is therefore recommended that they enhance their self-control to mitigate the impact of PSB and promote effective communication in the work environment. The study employed a purposive sampling technique, selecting a sample of 228 respondents from a total population of 7.112. The data analysis was conducted using SEM (Structural Equation Modeling). The study's findings indicate that PSB exerts a negative influence on social interaction; PSB has a negative impact on self-control; Self-control has a positive effect on social interaction; Self-control directly mediates the influence of PSB on social interaction. This research makes a significant contribution by delving deeper into the behavioral influences of PSBs in a governmental context and suggesting a practical approach through enhancing self-control to reduce technology-induced disruptions to interpersonal communication. This issue is increasingly relevant in today's digital age.
 This work is licensed under <a href="https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/">Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International</a>	<b>Keywords:</b> Generation Z; Phone Snubbing Behavior; Self Management; Communication

## INTRODUCTION

The integration of gadgets and the internet into daily life has become a prevalent phenomenon; with technological progress, the internet and smartphones have become an inseparable part of our lives (Yilmaz et al., 2024). According to the "State of Mobile 2023" survey, Indonesia has the highest number of internet users who utilize gadgets. Gadgets, which were initially used solely for communication purposes, have evolved into smartphones, which offer rapid and convenient internet access (Sayiner & Akbağ, 2023). The pervasive use of smartphones has been shown to impact work productivity (Galgo et al., 2023). A recent study indicates that employees spend an average of eight hours per workweek on smartphones, leading to concerns about boundaries between personal and professional life and its impact on employee performance (Duan et al., 2023; Naqshbandi et al., 2024; Skvortsova et al., 2022), and it has been demonstrated that this phenomenon can

lead to a decline in the quality of communication in the workplace (Martinsson & Thomée, 2025).

According to research findings, 33% of Generation Z spend more than six hours per day on their mobile devices, and they are significantly more likely to use social media than individuals from previous generations. Generation Z members use smartphones and social media extensively. This inclination is further underscored by a survey that revealed Gen Z in Indonesia to be the most prolific mobile phone users, with an average daily usage of 8.5 hours (I. Kim et al., 2020). A notable finding is that, despite being regarded as the digital generation, a significant proportion of Gen Z, specifically 44%, expressed a preference for in-person collaboration with teams and colleagues. A survey conducted by Kronos Incorporated further elucidates this trend. The survey, which included 3,400 respondents from various countries, revealed that 33% of Gen Z respondents prioritized flexibility in the workplace as a crucial aspect of their employment. This finding underscores the importance of adaptability in professional environments for this demographic.

According to Bajwa et al. (2023), one of the social phenomena resulting from gadget addiction in the workplace is phone snubbing behavior (PSB). An individual's actions are determined by their intentions (Dahri et al., 2023). While initial observations may appear to align with typical behavior, the presence of the intention to phub serves as a significant indicator of a decline in employee focus and engagement in work-related activities. Conceptually, PSB is defined as the behavior exhibited by an individual due to their addiction to their smartphone, which leads to a lack of concern for those around them (Karadağ et al., 2015). The escalation of PSB exerts an influence on employee conduct within the occupational milieu, thereby engendering an organizational quandary (Yousaf et al., 2022). The genesis of PSB can be traced to the unrestrained influence of modernization, stemming from the proclivity to access vast internet resources, leading to diminished opportunities for communication and interaction with others (Yasin et al., 2023). The excessive use of smartphones in the workplace has been shown to have a negative impact on social interactions, particularly in terms of a lack of care for the work environment (Machado et al., 2023; Nawaz, 2024; Yao & Nie, 2023).

Research conducted by Stevic and Matthes (2023) revealed no relationship between PSB and interactions in maintaining friendship satisfaction. In order to foster satisfaction in friendship and reduce social isolation, it is necessary to use the internet and smartphones together to communicate so that the internet and smartphones can change the way of interacting with the environment (Han et al., 2023; Odacı et al., 2024; J. Wei et al., 2024). Conversely, other studies have yielded contradictory results, suggesting that the utilization of the internet and smartphones can indeed diminish social interaction, thereby exerting a deleterious influence on the work environment (Bracht et al., 2024; Hessari et al., 2024; Y. Sun et al., 2023; Yang et al., 2023). However, the impact of social media on the work environment can be both positive and negative, depending on how it is utilized and its broader societal implications.

The ability to regulate one's behavior in a manner that fosters positive social interactions is crucial for maintaining healthy social connections (Biedermann et al., 2024; Choi et al., 2024; Imjai et al., 2024; Roffarello & De Russis, 2023; Schmidt-Barad & Chernyak-Hai, 2024; H. Zhang et al., 2024). Self-management, also referred to as “self-

control,” is the ability to regulate one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations. Self-control is identified as a protective factor that can mitigate the occurrence of negative behaviors that disrupt social interactions due to PSB (Dai et al., 2024; David & Roberts, 2024; Gao et al., 2023; A. Zhang et al., 2022). Self-control is defined as the ability to modify an individual's internal response to halt undesired behavior (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007; O’Gorman & Baxter, 2002; Tangney et al., 2018). In the context of professional life, an individual with limited self-control over the internet and smartphone use can experience an escalation in PSB. Conversely, an individual with high self-control over the internet and smartphone use will exhibit a reduction in PSB. It is imperative to uphold and preserve the caliber of social interactions (Al-Saggaf & O’Donnell, 2019; Incoll & Knowles, 2025; Jiang et al., 2023; Schmidt-Barad & Chernyak-Hai, 2024).

Given the extant literature on the subject, it is evident that a lacuna exists in the results of prior research concerning the influence of PSB on social interaction. This paucity of findings has prompted the author to undertake a re-examination of these studies, with the objective of validating the results through the incorporation of positive self-control as a mediating variable. This approach is hypothesized to serve as a mitigating factor, thereby reducing the impact of PSB. It is anticipated that the findings of this study will serve as a valuable reference point for future research in this domain. Moreover, the findings of this study can serve as a foundation for the development of more effective policies to manage the impact of the internet and smartphones on social interactions, both at the individual level and within the broader organizational environment.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Phone Snubbing Behavior (PSB) to Social Interaction**

At present, PSB has become a pervasive phenomenon that is often observed in various settings, including the workplace, due to the widespread adoption of the internet and smartphones (Ivanova et al., 2020; Karadağ et al., 2015). PSB can be defined as a person looking at their phone during conversations with others or coworkers, engaging with their phone, and avoiding interpersonal communication, which can lead to a sense of contempt for others (Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas, 2016; J. Sun & Samp, 2022) and consequently affect social interactions. PSB has been identified as a form of social exclusion caused by smartphone use, affecting social interactions (Ergün et al., 2020; Nuñez & Radtke, 2024; Tufan et al., 2024). PSB has been defined as a form of neglect towards others that damages communication relationships due to the use of smartphones during social interactions (Büttner et al., 2022). Research conducted by Pearson et al. (2023) revealed that university students used smartphones for more than 60% of their ten-minute conversations.

This finding is consistent with previous research indicating that individuals typically check their smartphones for approximately a quarter of the conversation time, thereby disrupting communication and social interaction (Humphreys & Hardeman, 2021; Ochs & Sauer, 2023; Oksanen et al., 2022). Consequently, previous studies have shown that PSB is regarded as a nuisance behavior that undermines the quality of social interactions and relationships (Farooqi et al., 2021; Miller et al., 2021). The extant research supports these findings, demonstrating that PSB leads to social rejection and diminished quality of social interactions and relationships (Abeele & Postma-Nilsenova, 2018; Chotpitayasunondh &

Douglas, 2016; McDaniel & Wesselmann, 2021; Miller et al., 2021; Nuñez et al., 2020). The following hypothesis is proposed:

*H1: PSB has a negative effect on Social Interaction*

### **Phone Snubbing Behavior (PSB) to Self Control**

The pervasive use of smartphones has become a salient trend among children, adolescents, and early adults, with a tendency toward excessive usage (Loleska & Pop-Jordanova, 2021; Miller et al., 2021; Olson et al., 2022). This phenomenon, characterized by the engagement with smartphones to the exclusion of the surrounding environment, has been designated as PSB (Albalá-Genol et al., 2025; Bajwa et al., 2023; Garrido et al., 2021). One of the factors that can influence PSB is self-control, defined as the capacity to determine behaviors in accordance with established norms, thereby fostering positive behaviors (Hessari et al., 2024; Xie et al., 2024). Research conducted by Kuang et al. (2023) revealed a negative correlation between self-control and sleep delay, a positive correlation between phubbing and sleep delay, and a negative correlation between phubbing and self-control. In a study by Hatamleh et al. (2023) and Khan et al. (2025) on communication between supervisors and subordinates, it was found that PSB affects communication between supervisors and subordinates, either directly or indirectly through psychological pressure, which affects self-control and weakens the negative relationship between supervisors and subordinates.

Phubbing is defined as the behavior of ignoring someone in a social environment by diverting attention to the phone (e.g., replying to messages or looking at notifications on a smartphone). In a study conducted by Latifa et al. (2019), 246 students who used smartphones in their daily lives were examined, showing that the PSB variable had a significant negative effect on self-control. In a related study on PSB in adolescents, a significant negative relationship between PSB and self-control was demonstrated, indicating that the higher the self-control of adolescents, the lower their PSB. In a related study, Schmidt-Barad and Chernyak-Hai (2024) utilized correlational and experimental designs to demonstrate that PSB exerts a detrimental influence on the quality of social interactions and undermines the connectedness between interaction partners. The correlational design revealed that self-control functioned as a significant mediator, while the experimental design revealed that continuous PSB exerted a negative impact on self-control. Based on these findings, the hypotheses proposed in this study are as follows:

*H2: PSB has a negative effect on Self-control*

### **Self-Control to Social Interaction**

Self-management, also referred to as “self-control,” is the ability to regulate one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations (Khalid et al., 2024). Self-control plays a pivotal role in fostering and sustaining positive social interactions (Tumiyem et al., 2024). A substantial body of research has demonstrated that individuals who exhibit high levels of self-control tend to demonstrate superior abilities to confront social challenges, manage conflict, and cultivate strong interpersonal relationships (Chen & Taylor, 2023; Han et al., 2023; Rottweiler & Gill, 2022; Xu et al., 2021). In the context of

research, self-control is defined as a person's ability to regulate emotions, behaviors, and internal drives to be in line with social norms and long-term goals (Duckworth et al., 2019; Duckworth & Steinberg, 2015; Kotabe & Hofmann, 2015). Research on smartphone use tendencies in college students indicates that the elimination of smartphone addiction in social interactions among students can be achieved through the enhancement of self-control (Tangney et al., 2018).

This finding aligns with the results of a study by Duckworth et al. (2019), which reported that individuals with high self-control tend to be preferred in social group interactions due to their ability to manage negative emotions and act in accordance with social expectations. In addition, research by Righetti et al. (2013) and Fitzsimons and Finkel (2011) highlighted that self-control influences social interactions in helping to prevent interpersonal conflict, thereby strengthening interpersonal relationships and supporting the achievement of common goals in the context of teamwork or community. A study by Zhong et al. (2025) found that social exclusion is a significant causal factor in the development of social media addiction, and self-control serves a protective function in reducing addiction. In summary, the aforementioned studies demonstrate that self-control exerts a substantial positive influence on social interaction. Based on these findings, the hypotheses proposed in this study are as follows:

*H3: The positive effects of self-control on social interaction*

### **Self-control mediates the effect of PSB on social interaction.**

The mediation of variables is said to occur when they exert an influence on the relationship between exogenous and endogenous variables (Namazi & Namazi, 2016). A review of the literature reveals that the relationship between PSB and social interaction has been demonstrated to influence various aspects, as evidenced by the following research: This includes studies by (Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas, 2016; Lailatul, Magfiroh; Maya, Oktaviani; Hurriyyatun, 2024; Ostow & Bates, 2000; J. Sun & Samp, 2022). Phubbing, defined as the act of ignoring others in favor of focusing on digital devices such as smartphones, has been associated with feelings of disrespect and disruptions to interpersonal relationships (Al-Saggaf & O'Donnell, 2019; Chatterjee, 2020; Garrido et al., 2021; Koc & Caliskan, 2023; Nuñez & Radtke, 2024; Schneider & Hitzfeld, 2021). The impact of phubbing on social interaction is influenced by both the intensity of the behavior and the individual's self-control capacity (Gao et al., 2023; Jiang et al., 2024). While the extant literature offers a variety of findings, a consensus emerges regarding the role of the individual's perception of social interaction in diminishing self-control.

The extant literature on the relationship between self-control and social interaction is inconclusive. However, a preponderance of studies have found a relationship between the two phenomena, as evidenced by the findings of X.-Y. Wei et al. (2024), Canbay (2020), H. J. Kim et al. (2018), and Fadilah et al. (2022). Recent research indicates that self-control can mitigate the adverse effects of phubbing on social interactions (Arimar & Wirtati, 2024; Isrofin & Munawaroh, 2021; Jiang et al., 2023). Consequently, self-control functions not only as a barrier against impulsive behaviors but also as a catalyst for enhancing empathy and attentiveness in social (Xiao et al., 2023; X. Zhao et al., 2024). Self-control plays a

pivotal role in mediating the influence of phubbing on social interactions. With effective self-control, individuals can mitigate the frequency of phubbing, fortify interpersonal relationships, and facilitate more meaningful social interactions. Conversely, an absence of self-control tends to exacerbate the negative consequences of phubbing, including a deterioration in mutual respect and the weakening of interpersonal bonds. In light of these observations, the central hypotheses put forth in this study are as follows:

*H4: Self-control mediates the effect of PSB on social interaction.*

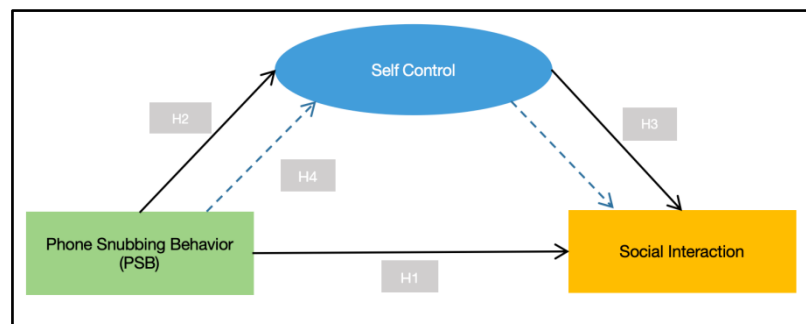
## RESEARCH METHOD

### Population and Sample

This study employed a quantitative approach, with a population consisting of the present study will examine the characteristics of 7,112 Generation Z civil servants working in West Sulawesi Province as of July 2024 (The State Civil Service Agency has published the 2024 State Civil Apparatus Statistics Book.). which involves the deliberate selection of a particular sample based on pre-determined criteria, was employed in this study. The target sample was determined to be Gen Z workers, a demographic that, according to extant research, spends an average of six or more hours per day on their mobile devices and utilizes social media platforms with greater frequency than their predecessors. This tendency is particularly pronounced in social settings, where Gen Z members appear to be particularly engrossed in their mobile screens. This tendency towards technology, including social media and instant messaging applications, has led to a notable decline in their ability to disengage from the real world. A study by I. Kim et al. (2020) revealed that Gen Z in Indonesia has the highest rate of mobile phone usage, with an average of 8.5 hours per day. According to a BPS report from the end of May 2024, there was an increase in smartphone usage in West Sulawesi, rising from 59.51% in the year to 61.89% in 2023. The proposed hypothesis will be tested using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis techniques. SEM technique is a statistical methodology employed for the assessment and estimation of causal relationships. This method allows the measurement of a series of relatively complex relationships as a whole (Tjahjono et al., 2021).

### Research Model and Measurement

Based on the previous studies and the arrangement of the hypothesis, the research model of this research is presented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1. Research Model**

The data was subsequently processed and analyzed using SEM (Structural Equation Modeling). This study encompasses three variables: Phone Snubbing Behavior (PSB), Self Control (SC), and Social Interaction (SI). The data for the following item is presented in the Table 1.

**Table 1. Survey Items**

Variable	Conceptual Meaning	Dimension	Survey Items
Phone Snubbing Behavior (PSB) (Chotpitayasu nondh & Douglas, 2016)	Defined as the behavior exhibited by an individual due to their addiction to their smartphone, which leads to a lack of concern for those around them	Nomophobia (PSB1-PSB4) Interpersonal Conflict (PSB5-PSB8) Problem Acknowledge (PSB9-PSB11) Self-Isolation (PSB12-PSB15)	PSB1: I get nervous if I'm not with my phone. PSB2: I don't like to leave my phone for a long time. PSB3: I keep my phone with me at all times. PSB4: I worry that I'll miss something important if I don't check my phone. PSB5: I have had problems with other people because I was on my phone. PSB6: People say that I use my phone too much. PSB7: I get offended when others ask me to put down my phone and talk to them. PSB8: I keep using my phone even though I know it's rude. PSB9: I use my phone too much. PSB10: I understand that I'm missing out on opportunities to talk to others when I'm on my phone. PSB11: When I'm on my phone, I tell myself, "I'll do it in a minute." PSB12: I would rather pay attention to my phone than talk to other people. PSB13: I feel satisfied when I'm on my phone instead of talking to other people. PSB14: I feel happy when I don't pay attention to others and focus on my phone. PSB15: I deal with stress by focusing on my phone and ignoring other people.
Self-control (Averill, 1973)	The ability to regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations plays a pivotal role in fostering and sustaining positive social interactions.	Behavioral Control (SC1-SC4) Cognitive Control (SC5-SC7) Decisional Control (SC8-SC11)	SC1: I decided to put my phone away first when I'm talking to other people. SC2: When a friend is talking, I listen to them. SC3: I also check my phone for notifications while talking to someone. SC4: I never turn off my phone while I'm talking to someone. SC5: I can stop myself from answering social media messages while talking to someone else. SC6: I can focus on the other person even when I'm receiving calls. SC7: I allow incoming calls on my cell phone while talking to others. SC8: I always make talking a priority. SC9: I know that I will not look at my phone when I am talking to other people. SC10: I think friends who are always playing with their phones when they talk should be counseled. SC11: I can ignore my phone's notifications when someone is talking to me.
Social Interaction (Gilllin & Gillin, 1948)	A reciprocal relationship exists when one or more individuals interact and influence each other.	Associative Interaction (SI1-SI6) Dissociative Interaction (SI7-SI12)	SI1: I think that if we work together, we'll be able to get things done more quickly. SI2: I believe that working together will help us get things done quickly. SI3: I'm friendly with my coworkers and the work environment. SI4: I communicate well with my coworkers and superiors. SI5: I have a good working relationship with the company. SI6: I believe that cooperation will create a positive and productive relationship between employees and managers. SI7: I try to avoid arguments at work. SI8: I feel that arguments with coworkers will get in the way of my work. SI9: I try to build good relationships with my coworkers so that there are no problems. SI10: I don't like it when there's unhealthy competition among coworkers. SI11: I try to be better than my coworkers. SI12: I sometimes compete to get good results.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The outer model assessed the relationships between latent variables and the indicators constituting latent constructs. Testing the outer model was carried out through validity and reliability assessments. As listed in Table 2, the factor loading value of each indicator exceeded 0.7, meeting the reliability, and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value of each construct was greater than 0.5. Therefore, the indicators could accurately measure the constructs. The Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha values of all constructs were higher than 0.7, proving the consistency and precision of the instrument in measuring the constructs of this research.

**Table 2. Construct Reliability Testing**

Constructs	N of Item	Cronbach Alpha	CR	AVE
PSB	15	0.942	0.938	0.505
SC	11	0.956	0.956	0.662
SI	12	0.960	0.961	0.672

As illustrated in Table 3, the output results of the model fit test for each variable are presented alongside the goodness of fit test. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) encompasses model specification, parameter estimation, and model evaluation based on the extent to which the constructed model elucidates the pattern of the observed covariance matrix. The model in the study is deemed feasible if at least one of the model feasibility test procedures is met, as can be inferred from the data presented in Table 3.

**Table 3. Goodness of Fit Indices**

Goodness of Fit Indices	Result	Cut-Off Value	Result
CMIN/DF	1.893	$\leq 2$	Good Fit
TLI	0.913	$\geq 0.90$	Good Fit
CFI	0.918	$\geq 0.90$	Good Fit
RMSEA	0.963	$\leq 0.08$	Good Fit

As illustrated in Table 4, the results of the hypothesis test are presented. Generally, a model structure that passes the goodness of fit test is deemed fit, and the subsequent process involves determining the influence of exogenous variables on endogenous variables. It is achieved by referencing the results of the hypothesis testing output using the SEM bootstrap method.

**Table 4. Summary of Hypothesis Testing**

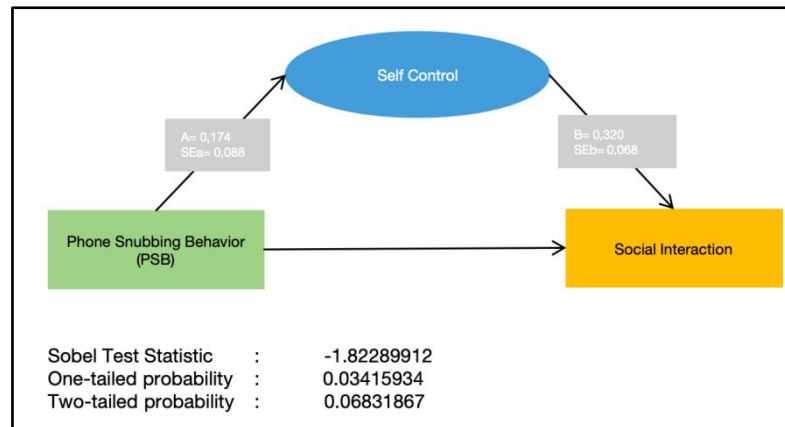
			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Result
SC	<---	PSB	-.174	.088	-1.976	.048	Supported
SI	<---	SC	.320	.068	4.731	***	Supported
SI	<---	PSB	-.163	.080	-2.022	.043	Supported

The initial hypothesis posits that PSB  $\rightarrow$  SI obtained a negative estimate value of -0.163, a critical ratio of -2.022, and a p-value of 0.043, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, H1 is accepted, meaning that phubbing at the workplace negatively affects social interaction. The second hypothesis posits that PSB  $\rightarrow$  SC obtained a negative estimate value of -0.174, a CR of  $-1.976 < 1.967$ , and p-values of  $0.048 < 0.05$ . Therefore, H2 is accepted, meaning that phubbing at the workplace has a negative effect on self-control. The third hypothesis posits that SC  $\rightarrow$  SI obtained a positive estimate value of 0.320, a critical ratio of 4.731, and



a p-value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . Therefore, H3 is accepted, meaning that self-control has a positive effect on social interaction.

In addition, the Sobel test is utilized to evaluate the mediation hypothesis (H4) and to determine the extent to which exogenous variables (X) exert an indirect effect on endogenous variables (Y) through mediating variables (Z). The indirect effect of the mediator variable must be calculated using the z-statistic developed by Sobel (1982) and the Sobel Test Calculator to determine the significance of mediation. The Sobel test results are shown in Figure 2. The Sobel test was executed using the mediation calculator (Friskila, 2022).



**Figure 2. Sobel Test**

The results of mediation role self-control using the Sobel test show a Sobel test statistic value of -1.82289912 and a one-tailed probability value of 0.03.  $0.03415934 < 0.05$  and two-tailed probability and  $0.06831867 > 0.05$ , then H4 is accepted at one-tailed probability; thus, the finding confirms that self-control mediates the relationship between PSB and social interaction, supporting H4.

The objective of this research is to validate the mediating function of self-control on the relationship between phone snubbing behavior (PSB) and social interactions that ultimately impede communication among Generation Z employees in the West Sulawesi government. Based on the results of the analysis, all the hypotheses proposed are proven to support. Namely, PSB exerts a negative effect on social interaction (H1); PSB has a negative effect on self-control (H2); Self-control has a positive effect on social interaction (H3); Self-control directly mediates the influence of PSB on social interaction (H4).

### **PSB has a negative effect on Social Interaction**

The findings indicate that PSB has a negative effect on social interaction among Gen Z employees, with higher PSB correlating with lower social interaction. It is indicated by a probability of 0.043 or less than 0.05 ( $0.043 < 0.05$ ) with a negative estimate value of -2.022. The findings of this study are consistent with the literature review of previous research, which demonstrates the relationship between phubbing at work and social interaction. This assertion is further substantiated by the findings of Chotpitayasunondh and Douglas (2016), J. Sun and Samp (2022), McDaniel and Wesselmann (2021), Nuñez et al. (2020), Miller et al. (2021); and Abeele and Postma-Nilsenova (2018). Conversely, lower PSB is associated with higher social interaction among Gen Z employees, suggesting a potential reciprocal

relationship between PSB and social interaction. PSB can be defined as an employee's deliberate or inadvertent focus on a mobile device while neglecting to engage in face-to-face interactions with colleagues. This behavior, often referred to as "phubbing," has the potential to adversely impact social dynamics within the workplace. This behavior can be characterized as a form of social neglect towards their colleagues, engendering a sense of disregard and, consequently, fostering a negative environment for interpersonal interactions.

Moreover, this tendency can also contribute to communication challenges as individuals become engrossed in their mobile devices, thereby exacerbating the deterioration of face-to-face interactions in the workplace. Consequently, employees may engage in PSB when their perceptions consistently justify this behavior in the workplace. As demonstrated in the findings of prior studies, including those by J. Sun and Samp (2022), PSB exhibits a negative correlation with social interaction. The implications of these findings extend to the realm of professional interactions, suggesting that when employees perceive PSB as consistently valid in the workplace, it may lead to a social divide or a decline in social interaction. Conversely, when PSB is minimal, social interaction among employees tends to increase. Therefore, employees must recognize that PSB behavior can potentially harm relationships within the workplace, thereby diminishing the quality of interaction at work.

### **PSB has a negative effect on Self-control**

The findings indicate that PSB exerts a negative effect on self-control, suggesting that as PSB increases, self-control decreases among employees. Conversely, as Gen Z employees perceive lower PSB in the workplace, their self-control tends to increase. It is indicated by a probability of 0.000 (\*\*\*) or less than 0.05 ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ) with a negative estimate value of -0.174. The findings of this study are consistent with those of previous research, including studies by Kuang et al. (2023), Khan et al. (2025), Gao et al. (2023), Fadilah et al. (2022), Latifa et al. (2019), and Schmidt-Barad and Chernyak-Hai (2024). One concept that is believed to be related to PSB is self-management, also known as self-control. Self-control is defined as a form of self-regulation that enables individuals to exercise restraint in the face of potentially detrimental influences, thereby influencing their well-being and professional performance. An individual with a low level of self-control may engage in "phubbing," defined as the act of using a smartphone while interacting with others, due to challenges in regulating their behavior (Al-Saggaf & O'Donnell, 2019; Hessari et al., 2024; Kuang et al., 2023). The findings of this study suggest that when employees perceive workplace interactions as being well established and prioritize face-to-face interactions over those conducted through mobile devices, this may be indicative of a high degree of self-control being applied in the workforce. Conversely, when employees perceive that workplace interactions are less established and face-to-face interactions are given less priority compared to interactions conducted through mobile devices, this may suggest a lower degree of self-control being applied in the workforce.

### **Self-control has a positive effect on Social Interaction**

The findings indicate that self-control exerts a positive effect on social interaction, suggesting that an increase in self-control in the workplace is associated with a corresponding increase in social interaction. It is indicated by a probability value of 0.048 or

less than 0.05 ( $0.048 < 0.05$ ) with a positive estimate value of 0.320. The findings of this study are in line with previous research that phubbing at the workplace affects social interaction, as in the research of Canbay (2020); Fadilah et al. (2022), X.Y. Wei et al. (2024), Ali et al. (2023), Meral and Vriends (2022), Rottweiler & Gill (2022), Janicke-Bowles et al. (2023) and Jo et al. (2025). Conversely, a decrease in self-control among Gen Z employees in the workplace is associated with a decrease in social interaction. Self-management or self-control is defined as the capacity to direct personal actions in accordance with one's morals when confronted with motivations that conflict with one's morality (Doelman et al., 2023). Social interaction can be defined as a dynamic social relationship concerning the relationship between individuals and human groups (Izharsyah et al., 2023; Long et al., 2022). Self-control plays a pivotal role in social interaction, serving as a form of self-regulation that individuals must possess to exercise restraint in the face of internal impulses that might transgress established religious and moral norms (Güner & Demir, 2022). The presence of this self-control among Generation Z employees is conducive to fostering positive social interactions and mitigating the occurrence of social gaps.

### **Self-control mediates the effect of PSB on social interaction**

The results of the fourth hypothesis testing in this study demonstrate that the phubbing at workplace variable directly mediates the relationship between phubbing at workplace and social interaction. It is indicated by the mediation value of the results of the Sobel test calculator, which obtained a Sobel test statistic value of -1.82289912, a one-tailed probability, and a two-tailed probability value of 0. The Sobel test statistic value of -1.82289912 and the One-tailed probability and Two-tailed probability value of 0.03415934  $< 0.05$  and 0.06831867  $> 0.05$ , respectively, support the hypothesis that positive self-control behavior can reduce negative phubbing at workplace behavior towards social interaction. This study lends further credence to the notion that self-control variables can effectively mitigate phubbing in professional settings, as evidenced by research findings. This finding aligns with the conclusions drawn in the research conducted by Fadilah et al. (2022), Gao et al. (2023) and Khan et al. (2025). It is evident that dedicated employees deliberately regulate their behavior to avoid negative phubbing in the workplace, thereby fostering positive relationships among colleagues. This approach is not only beneficial for individual employees but also contributes to the overall success of the organization. The phenomenon of "phubbing," which is the tendency to engage with smartphones while in the presence of others, has been observed in professional settings. This behavior has been linked to a dependence on smartphones, underscoring the need for individuals to exercise self-control in managing and discontinuing this practice (Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas, 2016; Farooqi et al., 2021; Latifa et al., 2019). Research on smartphone addiction has identified self-control and a sense of security as protective factors.

This research underscores the importance of self-control in mitigating phubbing behavior in the workplace. In the professional setting, individuals with low self-control (Hidayah, 2021; Marentes-Castillo et al., 2022; Mpaata et al., 2021; Wyss et al., 2022). It is due to the challenge individuals with low self-control face in regulating their smartphone use during interactions with others. Conversely, individuals with high self-control are less likely to engage in phubbing behavior (Al-Saggaf & O'Donnell, 2019; Tong et al., 2024; M.

Zhao et al., 2024). The presence of complete mediation or partial mediation is determined by assessing the statistical significance of the coefficient  $c'$  (direct effect). The absence of an independent variable effect when the mediator variable is controlled indicates perfect mediation. Conversely, if the effect remains significant, partial mediation occurs (Baron & Kenny, 1986; MacKinnon, Fairchild, et al., 2007; MacKinnon, Fritz, et al., 2007; Preacher & Hayes, 2008). A thorough examination of the statistical mediation effect's determination criteria reveals that the PSB  $c'$  coefficient and the indirect effect are both statistically significant. Consequently, it can be concluded that the mediation that occurs between PSB and social interaction through the mediator variable of employee self-control is partial. The mediating effect of self-control on the influence of PSB on social interaction has also been identified in research conducted by (Al-Saggaf & O'Donnell, 2019; Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas, 2016; Fadilah et al., 2022; Farooqi et al., 2021; Gao et al., 2023; Hidayah, 2021; Khan et al., 2025; Latifa et al., 2019; Marentes-Castillo et al., 2022; Mpaata et al., 2021; Tong et al., 2024; Wyss et al., 2022; M. Zhao et al., 2024). The results indicate that PSB exerts an influence on employee performance through self-control. In summary, this study demonstrates that self-control can function as a mediator variable, capable of observing the indirect effect on each variable in this study.

## CONCLUSION

This study provides substantial insight into the behavioral implications of PSB among Generation Z in West Sulawesi. This study supports the idea that self-control variables play an important role in the reduction of PSB among Generation Z employees. The phenomenon of PSB has been associated with smartphone dependence, which necessitates the development and maintenance of self-control to regulate and stop the behavior. Research on PSB has identified self-control and a sense of security as factors that can regulate behavior. Self-control was identified as an important factor in the reduction of PSB. These findings provide further support to the idea that individuals with lower levels of self-control tend to exhibit higher cases of PSB in their professional settings. This is due to the challenges these individuals face in regulating their smartphone use during interactions with others. Conversely, individuals who exhibit higher ratings in self-control show a lower tendency to engage in PSB in the workplace.

To increase the generalizability of the findings, future research should consider expanding the sample to include employees from different generations and sectors. In addition, the exploration of additional factors, such as personality traits or job stress, may enhance our understanding of the interaction between digital behavior and workplace communication. These recommendations are hoped to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics between technology use, self-control, and effective communication in organizational contexts. The following paper is intended to provide a comprehensive overview of the subject matter.

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