# PHUBBING BEHAVIOUR, AGE AND RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION AS ANTECEDENTS OF ATTITUDE TOWARDS MARITAL INFIDELITY AMONG FEMALE NURSES IN OWERRI, IMO STATE

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**ABSTRACT:** The study investigated whether phubbing behaviour, age and relationship satisfaction antecede attitudes towards marital infidelity. Data were collected via a convenient sampling technique from a sample of 250 Married female Nurses from different private hospitals in Owerri. Their ages ranged from 18 - 60 years. The participants completed self-reported measures of the Attitude towards infidelity Scale (ATIS) developed by Wheatley (2006), the Phubbing behaviour Scale (PS) developed by Karadag *et. al.,* (2015) and the Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) developed by Hendricks (1988). The design used was cross sectional survey design and descriptive statistics and hierarchical multiple regression were used to analyse the data. The results indicated that only relationship satisfaction negatively and significantly precedes attitudes towards marital infidelity ($\beta=-.32, t=-5.181, p<.01$). However, phubing behaviour ($\beta=.01$, t= -190 p>.005) and age ($\beta=-1.0$, t= (-1.492), p<.005) do not affect attitudes towards marital infidelity. Thus, it is recommended that partners be sensitized to the need to curb infidelity and strengthen emotional bonds as the quality of their relationship antecedents, whether one should engage in marital infidelity or not.

Keywords: Phubbin, Behaviour, Age, Relationship Satisfaction, Attitudes Toward Marital Infidelity

## INTRODUCTION

Commitment in marital relationships is one of the most critical issues for couples in the current period. Couples engage in marital relationships, form a family with many hopes and usually tend to be optimistic about the success of their marriage (Koolaee, Motlagh, Esmaili & Rahmatizadeh, 2014). However, some marriages inevitably run into problems that end in divorce and separation. One of these problems is infidelity, which is the most critical threat to the functioning, stability, and continuity of marital relationships (Mark, Janssen & Milhausen, 2011). Infidelity reduces couples' trust and ultimately leads to absolute mistrust (Farooq & Fatima, 2018). Findings from field studies also indicate that one of the main causes of divorce is marital infidelity, which refers to mistrust in marital relationships (Baucom, Pentel, Gordon & Sny-der, 2017). As a behavioural disorder, infidelity leads to abnormal and undesirable consequences and creates many problems for both the betraying and betrayed spouses. According to Fincham & May (2017) it may also lead to shock, disbelief, denial, beating, murder, and suicide. In their study, Atapour, Falsafinejad, Ahmadi and Khodabakhshi-Koolaee (2021) reported that marital crisis, dysfunctions in parenting roles, and job problems are some of the consequences of infidelity. Gonzalez-Rivara,

Aquino-Serrano and Pérez-Torres (2020) opined that marital infidelity can be emotional, sexual or a combination of both.

With the advent of smart mobile phone housing enabled apps, one would suspect that smart mobile phones and one's relationship with mobile phones would have an impact on one's attitude toward marital infidelity. According to Jung (2013), using smartphone is fun, useful, informative, and highly addictive. In fact, studies show that, on average, 81 percent of users keep their smartphone nearby for the entire day and check them 110 times per day (Woollaston, 2013). Smart mobile phones have encouraged phubbing behaviour in society today. Phubbing behaviour has been linked with a decrease in the quality of the primary romantic relationship, physical and emotional infidelity, relationship dissatisfaction, romantic disengagement, and a higher risk of divorce to social networking site addiction, an application housed by smartphone (Abbasi & Alghamdi, 2017a, Abbasi & AlGhamdi, 2017b; Abasi, 2018a; Kerkhof, Finkenauer, & Muusses, 2011; Velenzuela, Halpern, & Katz, 2014). In a study on phubbing behaviour, Chotpitayasunondh and Douglas, (2016) reported a deleterious effect of using a cell phone when in the company of a significant other. Hence, the researcher suspects that partner phubbing behaviour may be related to marital infidelity and wishes to explore the relationship between both variables. Researchers have found that digital media worsens the complexity of formulating consistent and clear criteria for judging the infidelity behaviors that already exist outside digital platforms (Adams 2017; Cravens & Whiting, 2014; Vossler, 2016). While we know that infidelity behaviours on social media also involve sexual and emotional variants, some of which are easily defined, such as flirting and intimate conversations others may be more controversial, such as remotely chatting with someone, even with strangers (Hertlein & Piercy 2012; Li & Zheng 2016; McDaniel, Drouin & Cravens 2017; Adams 2017; Vossler 2016). Such flirting and intimate conversation might lead to a relationship with a person other than one's spouse. According to Turkle (2011), phubbing behaviour impacts one of the most important elements of interpersonal interaction, which is eye contact. Indeed, when people engage in phubbing behaviour during their interactions with those around them, their eye contact is significantly reduced. According to Drago (2015), partner phubbing decreases the quantity and quality of the interaction and results in negatively perceived affiliation. Couples are not exempt from this issue, meaning that such communication problems can affect marital quality (Boelen 2014). High quality marriages are linked to marital happiness, good adjustment and satisfaction (Francis, 2012). Conversely, however, low marital quality increases the probability of divorce (Boo, 2014).

Relationship satisfaction is also strongly suspected to be related to one's attitude toward marital infidelity. Marital infidelity-related behaviours, which may include emotional and sexual infidelity, are highly linked to individuals not being satisfied in their relationship and marriage (Shaw, Rhoades, Allen, Stanley, Markmann, 2013). Few studies have suggested that attitudes towards infidelity are significantly important, as people who show more liberal stances on the issue of infidelity are more likely to be unfair to their partner (Gonzalez-Rivara, Aquino-Serrano &Pérez-Torres, 2020). This implies that a low level of satisfaction in the relationship could also be related to an individual's lack of commitment to their relationship. This is because satisfaction is an element that influences the level of commitment of a person; therefore, as there is a decrease in satisfaction, there is a greater tendency to engage in marital infidelity behaviours (Gonzalez-Rivara,Aquino-Serrano &Pérez-Torres, 2020).

Another variable feared to have an impact on marital infidelity is the age of the partner. Current studies indicate that both men and women are almost likely to cheat on their partners, a statistic that was used to favour men in the past. In a more recent study, Applebury (2020) reported that the rate of cheating increases with age for both married men and married women. In their study, Applebury (2020) reported that 20% of older couples reported that they had cheated during their marriage and approximately 24% of couples under the age of 55 reported adultery in their marriage. Most people who cheat have been married for 20 - 30 years and are between the ages of 50 and 60.

## Statement of the Problem

Infidelity is suspected to have become a common experience in Nigerian society. According to a new report by Durex, a condom manufacturing company in 2012, Nigerian women are the most unfaithful in the world with 62%. Ojedokun (2015) confirmed that, in some instances couples enter extramarital affairs as a result of poverty. However, Bhattarai (2012) reported an increase in extramarital affairs as a result of economic factors such as far-off employment when spouses migrated to other parts of the country or outside their country of origin to secure a paying job. Infidelity comes with a greater cost for the individuals involved, the relationship, and offspring compared with acts of fidelity in a marital relationship. This is absolutely true, as the limited resources mapped for the care and development of the family are diverted for extramarital affairs and the treatment of HIV/AIDS (Kenya Forum, 2013), as it encourages the spread of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) (National Aids Control Council (NACC) 2007). Such acts of infidelity have been found to induce poorer mental health especially depression/anxiety and PTSD (Cano& O'Leary, 2000), and even relationship dissolution/divorce (Betzig, 1989; Amato & Previti, 2003; Allen, & Atkins, 2012). Importantly, the dissolution of marriages negatively impacts offspring (Amato, 2010). Studies have shown that infidelity is also associated with domestic violence (Buss 1994; Daly & Wilson, 1998), and prostitution (National Aids Control Council (NACC) 2007 ); when it occurs with low rates of condom use with secondary partners, it can lead to a direct risk of exposure to sexually transmitted infections (Conley, Moors, Ziegler, & Karathanasis, 212). This situation places infidelity as a public health problem. Following its high costs, numerous attempts have been made to identify factors that predict attitudes infidelity, as knowing who is at greatest risk will inform prevention (Markman, 2005).

In the family realm, according to Roberts and David (2016) phubbing negatively predicts life satisfaction and depression levels, and a partner's phubbing behaviour has a negative effect on romantic relationship satisfaction. This behaviour is more common in couples, especially if one partner is not satisfied with the relationship (Siqun, Silu, & Nian, 2022). Phubbing behaviour is linked with a decrease in the quality of the primary romantic relationship, physical and emotional infidelity, relationship dissatisfaction, and romantic disengagement, and a greater risk of divorce (Abbasi and Alghamdi, 2017a, Abbasi and AlGhamdi, 2017b; Abbasi, 2018a; Kerkhof, Finkenauer, & Muusses, 2011; Utz & Beukeboom, 2011; Valenzuela, Halpern, & Katz, 2014). In such a scenario, it is important to consider all potential predictors of attitudes towards marital infidelity. Although interest in this topic has increased over the years, there is still a gap not only in the conceptualization of the phenomenon of marital infidelity but also in its antecedents and resultant effects on people. However, this concept has not received enough attention in Nigeria especially among married nurses. Few of the studies that exist are marked with inconsistent findings by various

researchers. Hence, this study intends to clarify the inconsistencies and contribute to the wealth of knowledge of Nigerians. There are also gaps in the knowledge about the role of phubbing behaviour, relationship satisfaction and age with respect to attitudes towards infidelity in Owerri. However, this study aims to fill these gaps.

**Purpose of the Study**

The main aim of this study was to explore the relationships among phubbing behaviour, age and relationship satisfaction with respect to marital infidelity among nurses in Owerri municipality. Some of the specific objectives include the following:

1. To investigate whether phubbing behaviour antecedes attitudes towards marital infidelity among married female nurses in Owerri.
2. To investigate whether relationship satisfaction antecedes attitudes towards marital infidelity among married female nurses in Owerri.
3. To investigate whether there are age differences in attitudes towards marital infidelity among married female nurses in Owerri.

**METHOD**

**Participants**

Two hundred and fifty (250) married nurses participated in this study. The respondents included 250 females selected from Owerri municipality through a convenient sampling technique. The respondents' age ranged from 18 - 61 years. In terms of the religious affiliations of various participants, Catholics constituted 87 (34.8%) participants whereas Anglican constituted 81 (32.4%) participants. The other religious groups included in the survey conducted were Pentecostal (68, 27.2%), Islam (7, 2.8%) and others (7, 2.8%). Only nurses who had been married for 2 years or more were eligible to participate in the study.

**Instruments**

Three instruments were used in this study, the Attitude towards Infidelity Scale (ATIS), the Phubbing Scale (PS) and the Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS).

**Attitude towards infidelity scale (ATIS)**: This 12-item scale was developed by Whatley (2006) to measure the negative and positive feelings of the participants towards infidelity. This questionnaire is scored on a 7-point Likert scale in which 1 represents "Strongly disagree" and 7 represents "Strongly agree". Examples of the item scales are "Infidelity is acceptable for retaliation of infidelity", "Being unfaithful never hurt anyone", and "Infidelity is unacceptable under any circumstances if the couple is married". The infidelity questionnaire evaluates the rates of willingness, acceptance and rejection from the perspective of offenders. The highest (84) and lowest (12) scores indicate the complete acceptance and rejection of infidelity respectively. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the questionnaire was 0.91. The reverse score items are 2, 5, 6, 7, 8 & 10. The ATIS was further validated by the researcher through a pilot study involving 50 nurses from Imo State University Teaching Hospital, Orlu and St Damian Hospital Okporo, Orlu. Reliability analysis was performed on the data obtained from these studies. The results showed that the scale exhibited an acceptable Cronbach's alpha of .50

**Phubbing Scale (PS):** This scale was developed by Karadağetal., (2015). The phubbing scale is used to measure phubbing behaviour. It consists of 10 items on this scale and is measured by a 5-point Likert scale to measure phubbing behaviour. Examples of Phubbing Scale include "I am always busy with my phone when I am with my friends", "People complaint about me dealing with my mobile phone", and "I am busy with my mobile phone when I am with friends at dinner." Respondent are given a rating from 1, which represents "Never" to 5 which represents "Always". The total scores of 10 items were added. The higher the score is, the greater the degree of phubbing behaviour. The reliability of this scale is ($\alpha$=.87) for 5 items related communicative disorders and ($\alpha$=.85) for another five items related to obsession. A higher score suggests more communication disruption and more mobile phone obsession, respectively. The PS was further revalidated by the researcher through a study involving 50 nurses from Imo State University Teaching Hospital, Orlu and St Damian Hospital Okporo, Orlu. Reliability analysis was performed on the data obtained from these studies. The results showed that the scale exhibited an acceptable Cronbach's alpha of .75

**Relationship assessment scale (RAS)**: This 7-item scale was developed by Hendrick, (1988) and was employed to measure global general satisfaction. The scale is a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1, which represents "very dissatisfied", to 5, which represents "very satisfied". An examples item scale is "In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?" In addition, "How well does your partner meet your needs". Items 4 and 7 are reversed scores. It is suitable for use with any individuals who are in an intimate relationship, such as married couples, cohabiting couples, engaged couples or dating couples. Research has shown that the scale should be correlated with other measures, such as living, sexual attitudes, self-disclosure, commitment and investment in a relationship (Hendrick, 1988). The total score can range from 3 to 21, with high scores indicating better relationship satisfaction. Internal consistency as reported by Hendrick (1988) for RAS is high (.86). The Relationship Assessment Scale was also subjected to reliability statistics to validate the instrument, and a Cronbach's alpha of .80 was obtained. RAS has been extensively used in Nigerian samples. The RAS was further validated by the researcher through a pilot study involving 50 nurses from Imo State University Teaching Hospital, Orlu and St Damian Hospital Okporo, Orlu. Reliability analysis was performed on the data obtained from these studies. The results showed that the scale exhibited an acceptable Cronbach's alpha of .72

**Procedure**

The researcher issued questionnaires to female nurses in different hospitals. Specifically, St. Davies Hospital, Mbari; Edge Medical Center, Prefab-Aladinma Phase 2; Mark of Glory Spcialist Hospital, MCC Road; Edem Medical Centre, Owerri; Avon Healthcare Lifespring Specialist, Okigwe Road; Vaden Specialist Clinic & Maternity, Owerri; Amanda Hospital, Works Layout, Owerri; Save a Life Hospital, Amakohia. Both the hospitals and nurses utilized in this study were selected via a convenient sampling technique. After a brief introduction, the researcher created a rapport with the participants, informed them about the study and assured them of the confidentiality of their responses and details. The participants were able to complete questionnaires both in the hospital and in their respective homes. Finally, the researcher thanked the participants and collected the completed questionnaires for coding. Among the 305 questionnaires distributed, 250 were completed by married nurses and were subjected to further analysis.

**Design and Statistics**

The design used was a cross-sectional survey design. The data obtained from the respondents were analysed via the use of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 21, and hierarchical multiple regression analysis was utilized for data analysis. This approach is considered suitable for this study because the statistical method helps in identifying and predicting relationships between interests.

**RESULTS**

The means, standard deviations, and inter-correlations of the study variables are presented in Table 1. The results of hierarchical multiple regressions for predictors of marital infidelity are presented in Table 2.

Table 1: **Means, standard deviations, and correlations among the variables**

|   |                           | M     | SD   | 1     | 2          | 3          | 4     | 5 |
|---|---------------------------|-------|------|-------|------------|------------|-------|---|
| 1 | Age                       | 1.22  | 1.19 | -     |            |            |       |   |
| 2 | Religious Denomination    | 1.06  | .99  | -.002 | -          |            |       |   |
| 3 | Marital Infidelity        | 35.22 | 7.58 | -.078 | .099       | -          |       |   |
| 4 | Phubbing Behaviour        | 28.85 | 6.22 | .020  | .074       | .042       | -     |   |
| 5 | Relationship Satisfaction | 24.70 | 4.74 | -.036 | -.190[**]  | -.324[**]  | -.093 | - |

[*] $= p< .05$ (two-tailed), [**] $= p< .01$

The results in Table 1 indicate that age does not have a significant correlation with attitudes towards marital infidelity. Relationship Satisfaction was negatively and significantly correlated with religious denomination (r = -.190, $p< .01$). This means that commitment to religious denominations and activities reduces the level of one's satisfaction in relationships among nurses in Imo State, Nigeria. In addition, Table 1 further reveals that relationship satisfaction is negatively correlated with attitudes toward marital infidelity (r=-.324, $p< .01$). This implies that as scores on the relationship assessment scale increase, the scores for attitudes towards marital infidelity decrease. Thus, from Table 1, one can further deduce that nurses who are satisfied with their relationship have a lower tendency to engage in attitudes and behaviours considered cheating the partner. In other words, marital infidelity stems from a lack of satisfaction in one's relationship.

**Table 2: Hierarchical multiple regression for predictors of marital infidelity**

| Variable | Step 1 β | Step 2 β | Sig |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Control* | | | |
| Religious Denomination | .10 | | .119 |
| | | | |
| *Predictors* | | | |
| Age | | | |
| Phubbing Behaviour | | -.09 | .137 |
| Relationship | | .01 | .849 |
| Satisfaction | | -.32** | .000 |
| | | | |
| $R^2$ | .01 | .11** | |
| $\Delta R^2$ | .01 | .10** | |
| $\Delta F$ | 2.454 | 9.633 | |
| *Df* | 1,248 | 4,245 | |
| Dublin Watson | 1.785 | | |

** $= p< .01$, *$p<.005$, DV = Marital Infidelity; *Note: N = 250;  **p < .01, *p < .05.*

The results of the hierarchical multiple regression analysis presented in Table 2 above were used to test the three hypotheses of the study. The overall model of the two step hierarchical regression analyses was not significant for religious denomination *[$R^2$=.01, F (3, 572), p>.05]*. However, the overall model was significant for age, phubbing behaviour and relationship satisfaction, as entered in Step 2 *[$R^2$= .11, F (4, 245), p<.01]*. The overall fit of the model revealed that 11.4% of the variation in attitudes towards marital infidelity among female nurses in Owerri was explained. In the same vein, age, phubbing behaviour and relationship satisfaction explained 10% of the variance in attitude towards marital infidelity when religious denomination was controlled for. This is a statistically significant contribution, as seen in the Sig F change value on the same line in Table 2. Additionally, the Durbin-Watson coefficient of 1.78 falls within the accepted range (1.5 < D < 2.5), indicating that there is no autocorrelation problem in the data and that the error term is independent.

The first hypothesis, $H_1$, which states that phubbing behaviour does not significantly influence attitude towards marital infidelity, was confirmed (β=.01, t=.190, p>.005). Therefore, phubbing behaviour does not antecede attitudes towards marital infidelity among female nurses in Owerri, Imo State.

The results indicated that age entered in Step 2 did not also antecede attitudes towards marital infidelity, β=.01, t= (-1.492), p>.005. Therefore, H2, which states that age is not a significant antecedent of attitudes towards marital infidelity among married female nurses in Owerri, Imo state was confirmed.

In the table, relationship satisfaction entered in Step 3 significantly precedes attitudes towards marital infidelity, β=-.32, t=- 5.181, p<.01. Thus, $H_3$ was not confirmed. The negative relationship was an indication that as scores on the relationship assessment scale increased, scores on attitudes towards marital infidelity decreased. This implies that nurses who are satisfied with their marital relationship have lower chances of cheating or engaging in marital infidelity and vice versa. Therefore, $H_3$ was not confirmed. Relationship satisfaction

accounted for 32% of the variance in marital infidelity. This means that for every .32 unit decrease in relationship satisfaction, marital infidelity increased.

**Summary of the Findings**

1. Phubbing behaviour did not antecede attitudes towards marital infidelity among female nurses in Owerri, Imo state.
2. Age did not affect attitudes towards marital infidelity among female nurses in Owerri, Imo state.
3. Relationship satisfaction significantly and negatively precedes attitude towards marital infidelity among female nurses in Owerri, Imo state

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The present study investigated whether phubbing behaviour, age and relationship satisfaction have antecedent relationships with attitudes towards marital infidelity. First, it was hypothesized that phubbing behaviour would not significantly affect attitudes towards marital infidelity among married female nurses in Owerri. The results of this study confirmed the hypothesis as phubbing behaviour does not significantly influence attitudes towards marital infidelity in Owerri. This finding suggests that a person's phubbing behaviour has no relationship with his or her attitude towards marital infidelity; that is, there is no way that a partner's phubbing behaviour is related with his or her attitude towards marital infidelity. This finding is consistent with the previous findings of (Esra 2017; Sarban, Salvati & Enea, 2022) who reported that phubbing behaviour does not negatively impact the marriage relationships of couples. This finding also contrasts with previous findings of Khodabaskhsh & Ong (2022) who reported that phubbing behaviour has a significant negative relationships with marital infidelity. This noticeable contradiction could be related to the culture of the people of Africa and Nigeria in particular, where male partners are known to be the heads of the households, and regardless of how pissed and angry a female partner is, she can only snub or try to escape interpersonal communication but not to consider engaging in marital infidelity. The idea never to consider delving into such acts labeled marital infidelity is to avoid certain consequences that accompany such acts in African land.

Second, it was hypothesized that age would not significantly affect attitudes toward marital infidelity among married female nurses in Owerri. The findings of this study confirmed this hypothesis, as age was not a significant antecedent of attitudes towards marital infidelity. This finding suggests that nurses' age tend to affect their attitudes towards marital infidelity. This contrasts with previous findings of Pour *et al.,* (2019) that revealed that personal factors such as gender, age, and education, as well as attitudes and cultural values are significantly related to marital infidelity. Similarly, scholars such as Okere and Ubani (2020) revealed that early marriage, age, the imposition of marriage partners, sexual incompatibility, childlessness, the uncaring attitude of a partner, hopelessness, depression, revenge, and a lack of preparation for marriage result in marital infidelity. A possible reason for this recent finding could be that in Nigeria, marriage is purely based on compatibility irrespective of the age of the partner. Therefore, for a partner to consider engaging in acts of marital infidelity, other factors such as education, forced or early marriage and sexual incompatibility, may fuel such attitudes but not age.

Finally, it was hypothesized that relationship satisfaction would not significantly affect attitudes towards marital infidelity among married female nurses in Owerri. This hypothesis was not confirmed as relationship satisfaction significantly and negatively predicted attitudes towards marital infidelity among female nurses in Owerri. This finding indicates that nurses who are satisfied in their marital relationship have lower chances of cheating or engaging in extra marital affairs whereas nurses who are not satisfied in their marital relationship have greater chances of cheating or engaging in extra marital affairs. Therefore, nurses' levels of satisfaction in relationships precedes their attitudes towards marital infidelity. This finding is consistent with the previous findings of Nafisa and Ratnasari (2021), who reported that marital satisfaction, gender and past infidelity experience were able to significantly predict attitudes towards infidelity. Another researcher Mahmood (2013) reported a significant relationship between infidelity and marital satisfaction. This recent finding also supports the previous findings of Shabankare *et al.,* (2021), who revealed that marital satisfaction has a mediating role in the association between the feelings of loneliness and attitudes towards marital infidelity. Another scholar Ndungu (2017), confirmed that a low level of marital satisfaction has a negative relationship with marital infidelity. In other words, attitudes towards marital infidelity are contingent on a partner's level of satisfaction in the relationship. A partner will not cross the boundaries of a marital relationship if she is satisfied with the relationship.

## Recommendations/Implications of the Study

As there are many reasons why married people engage in marital infidelity, this study provides a new perspective on managing attitudes toward infidelity with the aid of promoting a healthy relationships among married couples. The findings of this study are as follows: (a) Sensitization programmes before and after marriages are geared towards taking marriages seriously and shunning infidelity. Thus, counselling sessions before marriages and even after the marital engagements are essential to encourage married/intending couples to identify such behaviours or activities that can enhance the satisfaction of their partners to curb infidelity. (b) The establishment of psychological services centres offering such services as marital therapy should be availed to married/intending couples to gain insight and stay alert in their union and fight against all manners of infidelity. This centre should be located in all public hospitals and managed by clinical/counselling psychologists. (c) Provision of paying jobs for the citizenry as a way to empower them to make ends meet is another crucial recommendation. With jobs many of the sexual practices in society, especially those involving women, will be drastically reduced.

## Limitations of the Study

Although the present study has made enormous contributions to attitudes towards marital infidelity, some limitations of this study need to be considered. First, the problem of finance and funding poses a serious challenge, and as such, the researcher has to reduce and reduce the sample size in a bid to utilize the scarce resources made available for the study. Second, only nurses in private hospitals within Owerri municipality were utilized for the study. Additionally, the cross- sectional survey design of this study rules out any firm conclusions on the causal direction of the relationships between the studied variables.

**Suggestions for other studies**

There should be avenues for further research. This clearly highlights the need for longitudinal studies in the area of marital infidelity. The present study calls for more advanced studies that attempt to map the highly complex interplay between phubbing behaviour, age, relationship satisfaction with respect to attitudes towards marital infidelity in Nigeria and not just in Owerri Municipal, Imo State.

Additionally, potential researchers should carry out studies using married female lawyers and doctors or possibly female military personnel as participants. To enhance generalizability, future studies should be conducted across other cities to include diverse groups of health workers in the study. Such studies should also use of larger sample sizes.

**Summary and Conclusion**

The study investigated phubbing behaviour, age and relationship satisfaction as antecedents of attitudes towards marital infidelity among 250 married female nurses in Owerri, Imo State. The participants whose ages ranged from 18-60 years responded to self reported inventories. The study revealed that phubbing behaviour does not antecede attitudes towards marital infidelity; age does not antecede attitudes towards marital infidelity among nurses. On the other hand, relationship satisfaction significantly and negatively precedes attitudes towards marital infidelity among nurses in private hospitals.

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