

## Social Factors as Correlates of Cohabitation among Undergraduates in Ogun East Senatorial District Ogun State, Nigeria

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### Abstract

Indirect marriage otherwise known as cohabitation is fast becoming popular among undergraduates on our campuses in Ogun State and Nigeria in general. Cohabitation is a growing menace with far reaching psychological, academic, physiological, social and future marital consequences. The study therefore investigated social factors (physical intimacy, compatibility test, lack of hostel accommodation and academic dependency) as correlates of cohabitation among undergraduates in Ogun East Senatorial District of Ogun State, Nigeria. The study adopted survey research design which employed purposive, stratified and simple random sampling technique to select 800 respondents from four (2 public and 2 private) out of seven universities in Ogun East Senatorial District of Ogun State. Two research instruments used are Cohabitation Questionnaire ( $r = 0.70$ ) and Social Factors Questionnaire ( $r = 0.70$ ). Four hypotheses were tested. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple regressions. The four social factors of physical intimacy, compatibility test, lack of hostel accommodation and academic dependency has positive correlation ( $R = 0.315$ ) with cohabitation, meaning that the four social factors are correlates of cohabitation among undergraduates in Ogun East Senatorial District of Ogun State, Nigeria. Based on this findings, some recommendations includes tertiary institutions should continue to partner with private investors to build housing facilities within the school which can be partially monitored to discourage cohabitation especially for the younger generation and society should continue to promote the gain of marriage to discourage settling for less qualitative relationship like cohabitation. This act in itself will aid and uphold the existing traditional values and orientation emphasis on family formation.

**Keywords:** Social Factors; Cohabitation; Undergraduate; Senatorial District; Nigeria

### Introduction

The manner in which undergraduates entangle themselves in indirect marriages otherwise known as cohabitation on our campuses is very disturbing, fast becoming popular among undergraduates and gaining wide acceptance. Cohabitation is a growing menace with far reaching physiological, academic, psychological, social and future marital consequences. Abubakar (2008) defined cohabitation simply as an act of a man and woman living together and having a sexual relationship without being legally married. Ubrei (2015) sees campus cohabitation as male and female student renting and residing in the same apartment as though they were married. Abubakar (2008) asserted that this growing trend is gradually eroding the near absent level of morality among the youths. According to Ubrei (2015) they do all manner of domestic activities together like bathing, cooking, taking joint decisions, sleeping together and in some cases, operate joint account. Virtually, all of these are done without their parents' knowledge. Whereas Abubakar (2008) posits that taking a closer look on our campus today, unmarried students do not only live together but some of them engage in sexual activities among other things which married couples do. Ubrei (2015) asserted that handful justifications have been given for cohabitation on campus. In the opinion of some students, it is good because it helps pull resources such as food stuff from their silver spoon partners, to enable them survive in school, gain experience on how to handle marital life, share views and engage in group reading. Some others believe that it would aid intimacy and fully cement the relationship ahead of their formal approval by their parents.

Some students who agreed to bare their minds on this issue say, it is by living together that the so called campus couples get to know if they are ready or not ready for marriage. This is what De Vaus, Qu and Brown (2003) termed the 'try before you buy principle' – that living together provides opportunity for couples to see if they are truly compatible. The involvement of undergraduates in cohabitation coupled with the underlying consequences resulting from sexual interaction of premarital sex, which can lead to unwanted pregnancy, a route to abortion capable of causing organ damages which can cause barrenness or lead to death is the motivation for the study. Apart from these, infectious diseases and emotional trauma especially for ladies who may suddenly be dumped by the man involved are common. According to Bello and Ogunsanwo (2013) Nigerian policy on students' hostel accommodation which is encouraging private hostel developers may have its good side, but from observation, the inability of the tertiary institution in expanding and building new hostels had forced several students to look outside the campus for accommodation. This had led to the emergence of an unacceptable trend in most of our tertiary institutions in which male and female students cohabit in the same room.

The tendency for intending couples to live together before they are married is fast becoming popular and acceptable among undergraduates in Ogun State. Unlike before that everyone respects the acceptable standards of the society as regards the institution of marriage, the youths of today had thrown morality into the wind in favour of the perception that living together before marriage is a good idea. However, campus cohabitation is not without its grave consequences like the degradation of the sanctity of marriage that leads to marital instability, childlessness or even divorce in later years. Some undergraduates who cohabit may not even be able to concentrate on their studies and complete their programme in record time or even suffer rustication due to poor academic performance. Some had died in the bid to abort an unwanted pregnancy consequent upon premarital sex. Similarly, some even suffer emotional trauma due to the walking away of a partner, mostly the male. It is in this light that we hypothesized that Social factors (physical intimacy, compatibility test, lack of hostel accommodation and academic dependency) will not be significant correlates of cohabitation among undergraduates in Ogun East Senatorial District, of Ogun State, Nigeria.

### **Methodology**

The design of the study was the descriptive survey research. The utilization of the design was hinged on the fact that it is suitable for gathering data from a large number of cases at a particular time. The population of the study comprised of undergraduates from four out of seven universities in Ogun East Senatorial District of Ogun State, Nigeria. Purposive sampling technique was used to select four (2 public and 2 private) universities out of the seven universities in Ogun East Senatorial District of Ogun State, Nigeria. Stratified and simple random sampling technique was used to select 800 undergraduates out of the total of 22,150 undergraduates in the four universities in Ogun East Senatorial District of Ogun State.

The research instrument was the researchers designed Likert type questionnaire with four points rating scale of strongly agreed, agreed, strongly disagreed and disagreed. The instrument was validated by three experts and found suitable for collection of data for the study. Cronbach Alpha statistics was used to determine the internal consistency of the instruments. The Cohabitation Questionnaire (COQ) yielded reliability of 0.74 while the Social factors Questionnaire (SFQ) yielded reliability of 0.70. The questionnaire forms were self administered in the four universities. The authors utilized frequency counts, percentages and inferential statistics of multiple regressions to analyse the economic factors at 0.05 level of significance.

## Results

**Table 1:** Regression analysis on joint effect of social factors on cohabitation among undergraduates in Ogun East Senatorial District of Ogun State, Nigeria

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1173.954	4	293.489	34.974	0.000 <sup>a</sup>
Residual	10649.105	1269	8.392		
Total	11823.059	1273			

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Academic Dependency, Physical Intimacy, Lack of hostel accommodation, Compatibility test  
 b. Dependent Variable: Cohabitation

$R = 0.315$        $R^2 = 0.099$        $\text{Adj. } R^2 = 0.096$        $\text{Std. Error of the estimate} = 2.89685$ , Significant at  $p < 0.05$

Table 1 shows the joint effect of all independent variable when taken together with the dependent variable. The finding shows a joint positive effect of the four social factors: physical intimacy, compatibility test, lack of hostel accommodation and academic dependency on cohabitation among undergraduates in Ogun East Senatorial District of Ogun State, Nigeria with a multiple correlation of  $R = 0.315$ . This symbolizes the relevance of the variables as correlates of cohabitation among undergraduates in Ogun East Senatorial Districts of Ogun State, Nigeria. The four social factors put together accounted for (9.9%) 10% of the variance in cohabitation in the universities under study with  $R^2 = 0.099$  which was not due to chance. This means that the remaining 90% is due to other factors and residuals not included in the study.

Further investigation on correlative relationship between criterion variable and predictive variable was also performed using regression analysis which produces  $F(4,126) = 34.974$ ;  $P < 0.05$ . In essence, all the four factors taken together were effective in correlating with cohabitation among undergraduates in Ogun East Senatorial District of Ogun State, Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that social factors of physical intimacy, compatibility test, lack of hostel accommodation and academic dependency will not be significant correlates of cohabitation among undergraduates in Ogun East Senatorial District of Ogun State was rejected. It was concluded that social factors of physical intimacy, compatibility test, lack of hostel accommodation and academic dependency significantly correlates with cohabitation among undergraduates in Ogun East Senatorial District of Ogun State, Nigeria.

**Table 2:** Ranking of relative contribution of social factors to cohabitation among undergraduates in Ogun East Senatorial District of Ogun State, Nigeria

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Rank Order
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	18.976	.350		54.281	.000	
Physical Intimacy	.325	.042	.241	7.697	.000	1 <sup>st</sup>
Compatibility test	.024	.046	.018	.532	.595	4 <sup>th</sup>
Lack of hostel accommodation	.099	.038	.082	2.605	.009	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Academic Dependency	.090	.038	.073	2.363	.018	3 <sup>rd</sup>

Table 2 shows relative contribution of the four social factors to cohabitation in their ranking order. The finding showed that physical intimacy ranked first having made the greatest contribution to cohabitation ( $B = 0.241$ ,  $t = 7.697$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), lack of hostel accommodation ranked second having made a contribution of ( $B = 0.082$ ,  $t = 2.605$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), academic dependency ranked third having made a contribution of ( $B = 0.073$ ,  $t = 2.363$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) while compatibility test ranked last with a contribution of ( $B = 0.018$ ,  $t = 0.532$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) to cohabitation.

## Discussion

Table 2 shows that that physical intimacy, lack of hostel accommodation and academic dependency are social factors determining cohabitation among undergraduates in Ogun State. The result of the regression analysis run shows that 32.5 percent increase in physical intimacy is a pointer to the occurrence of cohabitation among undergraduates in Ogun State, 9.9 percent increase in lack of hostel accommodation would aid the occurrence of cohabitation in this group, 9 percent increase in academic dependency would also aid the occurrence of cohabitation. It was also found that compatibility test does not have any relationship with cohabitation among undergraduates. Rena Ravinder (2006) asserted that the first reason given for moving in together and found three distinct motives including more time together or greater intimacy, convenience and a deserve to test one's relationship. Ogunsola (2011) opined that cohabitation is a pre-marriage behaviour where intending/courting couples live together as if they were married, in order to try the relationship whether it will eventually be fit for marriage or not. The outcome of this research work was against this saying because the result of the regression analysis gotten was not significant. Arisukwu (2013) further noted that cohabitation among the undergraduates of University of Ibadan is quite common and was caused mainly by lack of accommodation, problems with roommates, lack of privacy and the need to be close and intimate with ones lover while Hadari (2014) found that some cohabiting students find it difficult to live apart because of financial or academic dependency, the strong physical intimacy between them makes them think sex is love.

Based on these findings, it is therefore recommended that the school counsellors should enlighten adolescents especially the females at tertiary institution during orientation programme for newly admitted undergraduates on dangers of premarital cohabitation so as to discourage the phenomenon that is on the increase. Tertiary institutions should continue to partner with private investors to build housing facilities within the school which can be partially monitored to discourage cohabitation especially for the younger generation. Parents, teachers as well as religious leaders should help discourage this phenomenon through teaching adequate norms and societal values, religious injunctions regarding marriages especially among the highly literate younger generation. Parents should strive to meet the basic needs of their children to prevent the temptation of seeking for financial assistance through cohabitation.

## Conclusion

In view of the findings of this study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Physical intimacy would significantly be a social correlate of cohabitation among undergraduates in Ogun East Senatorial District of Ogun State, Nigeria, but in the real sense of it, it was discovered that rather the intimacy growing stronger as long as they live together, the reverse is the case. They did not even get married to each other on the long run.
2. Compatibility test would not significantly be a social correlate of cohabitation among undergraduates in Ogun East Senatorial District of Ogun State, Nigeria as it discovered that rather than watching how they will be compatible later in life, they turned themselves into sex partners.
3. Lack of hostel accomodation would significantly be a social correlate of cohabitation among undergraduates in Ogun East Senatorial District of Ogun State, Nigeria as this situation makes either party in the cohabitation to dependent on their partner for survival as far as provision of accommodation is concerned.
4. Academic dependency would significantly be a social correlate of cohabitation among undergraduates in Ogun East Senatorial District of Ogun State, Nigeria but rather than improving the academic performance of cohabiters, the 'campus wife' who cooks and washes clothes among other unwarranted matrimonial duties may not be at her best academically (Ubrei, 2015). This singular reason had forced many female students out of school having spent their school fees on their 'campus husband' (Abubakar, 2008). Eventually, the academic reason for cohabitation is jeopardized.

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