# PREVALENCE OF COHABITATION AND ITS IMPLICATION ON UNDERGRADUATES' ACADEMIC ATTAINMENT AT TAI SOLARIN UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

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## ABSTRACT

*The conscious attitudinal constructs termed "cohabitation" that is displayed by students in tertiary made two people to romantically choose to live together without making formal commitment of marriage. The study x-rayed cohabitation among the undergraduate students of Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun Ogun State; and specifically identified factors that are responsible for cohabitation among undergraduate students, related implications caused by cohabitation among*

*undergraduate, various challenges facing cohabiting undergraduate students, and proffered remedies to the implication caused by cohabitation of undergraduate students. The study employed the use of descriptive study to afford access to considerable number of respondents. Four hundred and fifty (450) respondents comprising both male and female students were randomly selected from various colleges and departments for the study. Structured questionnaire with 20 items was used to elicit response from the participants. Descriptive statistical instruments (frequency counts, simple percentages and mean) were employed to analyse the data collected. The study established that conscious and unconscious attitudinal construct (cohabitation) displayed by students in the course of their short stay pursuing academic endavour derails their academic attainments psychologically, and cause great havoc to their wellbeing. Lack of strict rules formulated that are against cohabitation, sexual freedom, inadequate, high cost of hostel accommodation and relevant infrastructural facilities are some of the factors that are responsible for cohabitation among students. Among other recommendations, available, affordable and befitting accommodation should be provided for all students by government and non-governmental organizations.*

**Key words: Cohabitation, Undergraduates, Heterosexual**

## INTRODUCTION

Cohabitation related issue amongst students in various tertiary institutions of learning across Nigeria has become a trending psychological issue to education stakeholders due to the impact felt on the society. Ogunsola (2011) perceived cohabitation as occasionally engaging in marital relations without being officially wed. Cohabitation is the term used to describe the act of two opposite sex living together to share all or some of the benefits of marriage (Ogadimma, 2013); however, they are not legally or conventionally wed. Adeniyi (2019) posited that the term cohabitation is frequently used to describe heterosexual couples or same-sex couples to cohabit illegally.

Abullahi (2013) was of the view that cohabitation is a status, a process, and an alternate sort of dwelling for at least one of the cohabiting couples. The author further reiterated that cohabitation is not a novel concept. However, the phenomenon's popularity and ambiguity have caused the general public's perception of it to change from the norm for young men and women; and seen as one of a deviant or alternative lifestyle option. This sort of lifestyle is prevalent among tertiary institution students due to insufficient and in most cases lack of residential provision for the students within institutions by the management (Svodziwa & Kurete, 2017; Aluko, 2011); and population explosion related challenges. Hence, the rented apartments that are built for business purposes around higher institutions now become second option for the students that are anxiously looking for residential apartments.

The freedom attained on the platform of cohabitation has resulted into indulgence into sexual liberation termed pre-marital sex, alternative forms of sexuality, homosexuality, public nudity, pornography, legalization of abortion and normalization of pills and contraceptives (Augustinah, Bola & Louis 2018). This therefore seems to promote cohabitation among students of opposite sex illegally and irreligiously as perceived by some authors (Onoyase, 2020). Issues on sexuality that was seen to be sacred, taboos or vices previously for unmarried couples have been elevated to the status of virtues to be pursued or celebrated among various nations around the world, especially in western society due to seemingly legalized cohabitation among young adults. Cohabitation has increased among adults and young adults as a celebration of sexual freedom and pre-marital sex in numerous forms of entertainment, including movies and music videos that have form varied attitudinal constructs.

Attitudinal constructs towards cohabitation have various cultural, religious and other related individual factorial inclinations. Studies revealed cohabitation among Nigerian undergraduate students to have various social and psychological implications. Adeleye (2013) posited that cohabiting students faces social stigma or disapproval from their families and communities; based on the premise that many societies in Nigeria have conservative social and cultural norms reservations regarding

premarital cohabitation. Religious doctrines frown at cohabitation outside marriage due to long time consequences (Oladepo, Yusuf, Arulogun & Olaogun, 2018); dwindling effect on students' academic performance due to high level of distractions, misplaced of priorities and increased shouldering of irrelevant responsibilities (Jiya & Zhiri, 2019); and unbearable financial challenges on cohabiting couples' overall well-being (Udeh, Iwuamadi & Iwuamadi, 2019).

Lack of knowledge on dynamics (expectations, communication and commitment) of cohabiting relationships like legally married couples (Adepoju & Olajubu, 2019); unplanned pregnancies, increased vulnerability to sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and health-related challenges (Obarisiagbon, 2023); and psychological effects (stress, anxiety, and emotional challenges) that may contribute to uncertainty and emotional distress (Fareo & Moses, 2018).

Subsequently, cohabitation of students could affect the environment where a higher institution is situated in the sense that students who are brought up or trained within such environment may likely become sexually immoral (Duyilemi, Tunde-Awe & Adekola, 2018), thereby exposing them to sexual abuse at their tender age. Young adult especially the female develop unruly cognitive interest in prostituting business; while the male may have less norm and etiquette for sexual purity before marriage due to behavioural constructs exemplified and displayed by cohabitation (Adeleye, 2013). These could lead to domestic violence as well as emotional trauma especially the female undergraduates. Summarily, attitudinal related constructs toward cohabitation are evolving and individual experiences and perception might vary. Studies revealed that regional and cultural differences within Nigeria exemplified great influence on the acceptance and implications of cohabitation among undergraduate students. Therefore, this study investigated the factors responsible for cohabitation, resulting implications of cohabitation, challenges facing cohabiting undergraduate student's academic attainment, and remediating challenges facing cohabiting undergraduate students of Tai Solarin University of education.

**Statement of the Problem**

Cohabitation is a conscious and unconscious attitudinal constructs displayed that make two unmarried people to engage in romantic, emotional and sexually intimate to choose to live together as couple outside wedlock. This act is prevalent mostly among tertiary institution students due to flimsy excuses to satisfy their emotional desires. This lifestyle tends to become worrisome social vice to education stakeholders (parents, researchers, health practitioners, etc.) in most Nigerian tertiary institutions through engagements in pre-marital sex, unwanted teenage pregnancy, increase rate of abortions, spread of sexually transmitted diseases such as gonorrhea, syphilis and HIV/AIDS, (Augustinah et al., 2018); and other related acts that caused distractions to students' academic attainment due to emotional and psychological trauma birthed by this attitude. Based on the literature reviewed by the researchers, there was need to find out the root cause for cohabitation among undergraduates, implications for their cohabitation and related solutions to remediate the uncontrollable act of cohabitation among students in Nigeria, by contextualizing Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, Ogun State, Nigeria.

**Purpose of the study**

The main objective of this study is to x-ray cohabitation among the undergraduate students of Tai Solarin University of education, Ijagun, Ogun State. Specifically, the study:

1. Identified factors that are responsible for cohabitation among undergraduate students.
2. Investigated the related implications caused by cohabitation among undergraduate.
3. Determine the various challenges facing cohabiting undergraduate students.
4. Proffered remedies to the implication caused by cohabitation of undergraduate students.

**Research Questions**

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the factors responsible for cohabitation among undergraduates of Tai Solarin University of Education?
2. What are the related implications caused by cohabitation among undergraduates of Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun?
3. What are the challenges facing cohabiting undergraduate students in Tai Solarin University of Education?
4. What are the possible solutions to remediate the implications caused by cohabitation among undergraduate students at Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun?

**Methodology**

The researcher adopted a descriptive research design, which facilitated the study to elicit opinions of the respondents.The population for this study comprised of all students of Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun Ogun State. However, simple random sampling techniques was employed to select four hundred and fifty (450) respondents from all the five colleges in the university. Self structured questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. The questionnaire consisted of two sections: Section A consists of respondent's bio-data such as students' gender and age range. Section B for consists of twenty open-ended structured items on factors responsible for cohabitation among undergraduate students, related implications caused by cohabitation among undergraduate, challenges facing cohabiting undergraduate students and suggested remedies to the implications caused by cohabitation of undergraduate students. The validity of the instrument was done by three experts in the Department of Adult Education, Tai Solarin University of Education for professional corrections. Cronbach-alpha statistical instrument was used to established the internal consistencies and the instriument relaibility index attained was 0.83.The data collected was analyzed using frequency counts, simple percentages and means.

**Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Gender**

| Respondents | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Male | 177 | 39.3 |
| Female | 273 | 60.7 |
| **Total** | **450** | **100** |

Table1revealed male respondents that were randomly sampled and participated in the study were 177(39.3%); while the female was 273(60.7%) respectively.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Age

| Age | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| 15 – 20 years | 105 | 23.3 |
| 21 – 25 years | 240 | 53.4 |
| 25 years and above | 105 | 23.3 |
| **Total** | **450** | **100** |

Table 2 revealed that 105 respondents which represent 23.33% are between the ages of 15-20, 240 respondents which respondents 53.33% between the age bracket of 21-25 years, and 105 respondents which represent 23.33% were within the age bracket of 25 years and above. These age brackets were consider the age range of the students that should be considered deemed fit to pursue regular undergraduates' programmes.

**Research Question 1:** What are the factors responsible for cohabitation among undergraduate students of Tai Solarin University of Education?

Table 3: Factors Responsible for Cohabitation among Undergraduate Students

| | Items | A | % | D | % | N | $\bar{X}$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Lack of strict rule against cohabitation by the students encourage it among | 366 | 81.3 | 84 | 18.7 | 450 | 3.1 |
| 2. | Sexual freedom is responsible for cohabitation among students. | 357 | 79.3 | 93 | 20.7 | 450 | 2.9 |
| 3. | Inadequate hostel accommodation/facilities encourage students to cohabit | 402 | 89.3 | 48 | 10.7 | 450 | 3.0 |
| 4. | High costs of hostel facilities brings about cohabitation among students | 387 | 86.0 | 63 | 14.0 | 450 | 3.3 |
| 5. | Lack of basic amenities (i.e good electricity, water) in the school hostel accommodation | 339 | 75.3 | 111 | 24.7 | 450 | 2.8 |
| | **Grand Mean Scores** | **370** | **82.2** | **80** | **17.2** | **450** | **3.2** |

**Note: A= sum of Strongly Agreed and Agreed D= sum of Strongly Disagreed and Disagreed**

Table3 shows the related factors that are responsible for undergraduates' cohabitation. The frequency counts 366(81.3%) for lack of strict rule guiding against cohabitation that encourages students indulge into the act has the mean score of 3.1; seeking for sexual freedom among students 357(79.3%) with the mean score of 2.9; inadequate provision of hostel accommodation/facilities 402(89.3%) with the mean score of 3.0; high costs of hostel facilities 387(86.0%) with the mean score of 3.3; and lack of basic infrastructural amenities (i.e good electricity, water) in the school hostel accommodation 339(75.3%) with the mean score of 3.8. The frequency counts of 370(82.2%) and grand mean scores of 3.2 affirmed that non strict compliance, sexual freedom, high cost of school accommodation, lack of good amenities are the contributing factors to students cohabitation at Tai Solarin University of Education.

**Research Question 2:** What are the related implications caused by cohabitation among undergraduates of Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun?

Table 4: Implications of Cohabitation among Undergraduates

| S/N | Items | A | % | D | % | N | $\bar{X}$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6. | Cohabitating students lacked relevant privacy needed for academic studies. | 387 | 86.0 | 63 | 14.0 | 450 | 3.7 |
| 7. | Cohabitation exposes students to gender based related violence | 390 | 86.7 | 60 | 13.3 | 450 | 3.9 |
| 8. | Cohabiting students in the school are prone to infidelity after marriage | 339 | 75.3 | 111 | 24.7 | 450 | 3.0 |
| 9. | Cohabitation among students causes poor academic attainments | 381 | 84.7 | 69 | 15.3 | 450 | 3.4 |
| 10. | Resultant effects of cohabitation causes uncontrollable abortion | 387 | 86.0 | 63 | 14.0 | 450 | 3.7 |
| | **Grand Mean Scores** | **377** | **83.8** | **73** | **16.2** | **450** | **3.5** |

**Note: A= sum of Strongly Agreed and Agreed D= sum of Strongly Disagreed and Disagreed**

Table 4 revealed the opinions of the respondents on the implications of cohabitations by undergraduates. The frequency counts of 387(86.0%) with the means scores of 3.7 of the respondents affirmed that cohabiting on revealed that cohabitating students lacked relevant privacy needed for academic studies; 390(86.7%) with the means scores of 3.9 agreed that cohabitation exposes students to gender based related violence; 339(75.3%) with the means score of 3.0 revealed that cohabiting students in school are prone to infidelity after marriage; 381(84.7%) of the respondents affirmed that cohabitation among students causes poor academic attainments with mean score of 3.1; and abortion with mean score of 3.1; and the resultant effects of cohabitation causes uncontrollable abortion among undergraduate students. The frequency counts and grand means of 377(83.8%) exemplified implications of lack of privacy, gender biased related violence, infidelity in marriage, poor academic attainments and uncontrollable abortions due to cohabitation among undergraduates. Research questions answered the related perennial challenges facing the cohabiting undergraduates.

**Research Question 3:** What are the challenges facing cohabiting undergraduate students in Tai Solarin University of Education?

**Table 5:** Challenges Facing Cohabiting Undergraduates

| S/N | Items | A | % | D | % | N | $\bar{X}$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11. | Cohabiting students are faced with the challenges that are associated with poverty. | 381 | 84.7 | 69 | 15.3 | 450 | 3.4 |
| 12. | Students who live together have more conflict and less satisfaction with their relationships | 402 | 89.3 | 48 | 10.7 | 450 | 3.6 |
| 13. | Students who cohabit have unprotected sex which causes unwanted pregnancies and other related sexual transmitted diseases. | 411 | 91.3 | 39 | 8.9 | 450 | 3.7 |
| 14. | Cohabitation encourages female students to spending extravagantly via indulgence in the use of oral contraceptive. | 366 | 81.3 | 84 | 18.7 | 450 | 3.1 |
| 15. | Cohabiting students are more likely face challenge of breaking up thereby affecting their studies. | 402 | 89.3 | 48 | 10.7 | 450 | 3.6 |
| | **Grand Mean Scores** | **392** | **87.2** | **58** | **12.8** | **450** | **3.5** |

**Note: A= sum of Strongly Agreed and Agreed D= sum of Strongly Disagreed and Disagreed**

Table 5 shows the challenges confronting undergraduate students that cohabit together. The frequency counts of 381(84.7) and the means score of 3.4 affirmed that cohabiting students are faced with the challenges that are associated with poverty; while students living together have more conflict and less satisfaction with their relationships with mean score of 3.0, with students having unprotected sex leading to unwanted pregnancies and other sexual transmitted diseases have a mean score of 3.4, Cohabitation has serious issue to the female students that may indulge in the use of oral contraceptive with mean score of 3.1 and they are more likely break up with mean score of 3.3. Invariably, all this put together are among the various challenges facing cohabiting undergraduates in Tai Solarin University of Education.

**Research Question 4:** What are the possible solutions to remediate the implications caused by cohabitation among undergraduate students at Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun?

**Table 6:** Possible Solutions for Cohabitation among Undergraduates

| S/N | Items | A | % | D | % | N | $\bar{X}$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16. | Good orientation on implication of cohabitation should be organised for students. | 423 | 94.0 | 27 | 6.0 | 450 | 3.8 |
| 17. | Parents should be encouraged to frequently visit their children/ward in order to find out where and whom their children/wards are staying with in the school. | 405 | 90.0 | 45 | 10.0 | 450 | 3.6 |
| 18. | Cohabitation should be outlawed. | 387 | 86.0 | 63 | 14.0 | 450 | 3.4 |
| 19. | Hostel accommodation in tertiary institutions should be strictly gender based. | 370 | 82.2 | 80 | 17.8 | 450 | 3.3 |
| 20. | Government should provide necessary infrastructures needed by students. | 399 | 88.7 | 51 | 11.3 | 450 | 3.5 |
| | **Grand Mean Scores** | **397** | **88.2** | **53** | **11.8** | **450** | **3.5** |

**Note: A= sum of Strongly Agreed and Agreed D= sum of Strongly Disagreed and Disagreed**

Table 6 shows the analysed data on the possible solutions remediate cohabitation related issues among undergraduates. The frequency counts of 423(94%) with mean score of 3.8 affirmed that good orientation on implication of cohabitation should be organised for students, Parents should be encouraged to frequently visit their children/ward in order to find out where and whom their children/wards are staying with in the school {405(90%)}, with the means score of 3.6. Also, the respondents' frequency counts of 387(86.0%) agreed that stringent law should be made to forbid cohabitation among the students; 370(82.2%) with mean score of 3.3 affirmed that hostel accommodation in tertiary institutions should be strictly gender based; and 399(88.7%) with mean score of 3.5 of the respondents' responses affirmed government should provide necessary infrastructures needed by students. The respondents average of the frequency counts {397(88.3%)} and high grand means scores of 3.5 considering the bench mark of 5.0, exemplified that the enumerated suggestions would go long way in remediating the perennial challenges caused by cohabitations by students.

## Summary and Conclusion

The study x-rayed cohabitation among the undergraduate students and specifically identified factors that are responsible for cohabitation among undergraduate students, related implications caused by cohabitation

among undergraduate, various challenges facing cohabiting undergraduate students, and proffered remedies to the implication caused by cohabitation of undergraduate students. The study established that conscious and unconscious attitudinal constructs displayed by students in the course of their short stay pursuing academic endavour derails their academic attainments psychologically, and cause great havoc to their wellbeing. Lack of strict rules formulated that are against cohabitation, sexual freedom, inadequate, high cost of hostel accommodation and relevant infrastructural facilities are some of the factors that are responsible for cohabitation among students. Cohabitation exposes students to gender based violence, prone to infidelity after marriage, poor academic performances and attainments, uncontrollable abortion, sexual transmitted diseases, among others. Hence, available, affordable and befitting accommodation is suggested for all students by government and non-governmental organizations.

**Recommendation**

Based on the findings from this study, the following recommendations are proffered:

i. Parents should be encouraged to visit their children and find out where and whom they lives with in school.
ii. Provision of hostel accommodation in tertiary institutions should be strictly gender based and not cohabitation.
iii. Cohabitation should be outlawed in all Nigerians' tertiary institutions.
iv. Government and non-governmental organizations should partner with the university management in providing affordable and befitting hostel accommodations for students' habitation.
v. The university management should discourage cohabitation of students living off campus via public awareness and sensitization.
vi. Students should be free to visit counselors to discuss challenges encountered during cohabitation and be guided on how such ordeal can be remediate.

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