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A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF COHABITATION AMONG STUDENTS IN A SELECTED NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

This study analyzed cohabitation among students with a view to investigate their perception on cohabitation, examined the perceived factors responsible for cohabitation and assessed the perceived effects of cohabitation on the undergraduates in Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye. The study employed ex-post facto design and 226 undergraduates were sampled using systematic, proportional and convenience sampling techniques. Primary data collected through a self-designed questionnaire was analyzed using SPSS. The findings showed that undergraduates had positive perceptions towards cohabitation and there were several reasons were adjudged for high wave of cohabitation among undergraduates in OOU (increase in school fees, high quest to understand partners, lack of religious inclination, absence of supervision). More so, cohabitation had diverse effects on undergraduates which included: high level of moral decadence, incidence of sexually transmission diseases, prevalence of abortion, cases of unplanned and unintended pregnancies, increased rate of frustration and depression caused by relationship problems.

Keywords

cohabitation, undergraduates, perception, sociological appraisal

Introduction

Universities are established for career, personal and societal growth. Despite these three purposes, University education in Nigeria is full of maladaptive behavior (Oladejo, 2022). This is due to that fact that most undergraduates are mainly youths, between 18-21 years upon their entrance into the university, of different universities Nigeria (Onayose, 2020). These undergraduates engage in social vices such as: prostitution, abortion, cultism, examination malpractice, stealing, killings, cohabitation (Adeniyi, 2019). The most disturbing of all these vices is cohabitation.

Cohabitation is an arrangement in which two grown up adults, though not married, live together and engage in sexual relationship within the periods of staying together (Iyekolo, 2021). This kind of arrangements is rampant on university campuses in Nigeria (Kalu, Ejiogu, Chukwukadibia & Nleoma, 2021). Cohabitation among undergraduates arises when female and male undergraduates live under the same roof, in the same room with the purpose of having sexual relationship with each other. It is true that there has ever been this kind of living pattern on Nigerian University campuses since inception; the incidence of cohabitation among the understanding in recent times is at alarming. It is difficult to see an undergraduate living alone without having an opposite sex as roommate. According to Fareo and Moses (2018) not less than 45 percent of undergraduates live as couples on campus.

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The issue of cohabitation is increasing among undergraduates. They engage in this living pattern to test whether they are compatible with their future partner without any legal and moral commitment towards marriage (Bello, 2022). Hence, cohabitation is seen as a good trial and error period by undergraduates before engaging in the marriage process. They see living with opposite sex premarital step (Duyelemi, Tunde-Awe & Adekola, 2018). Undergraduates also believe that through cohabitation they can improve their chances of staying together with their future partner. They also see cohabitation as a way through which they share resources such as residence and feeding; also, an avenue for sharing expenses like rent, and payment of other bills (Jiya & Alhassan, 2019). Consequently, cohabitation among undergraduates is seen as a more convenient means of savings and discovering likely future partner and compatibility with such person.

Wamukoya (2018) maintains that most undergraduates belief that they get to understand the behavior of their partner better before marriage through cohabitation. This may be true. However, high causes of depression, worry, sadness, distress, bitterness, hopelessness, and suicidal ideation occur among undergraduates as a result of cohabitation. Many students committed suicide due to relationship breakups with their partner whom they cohabitate with (Kasim & Falola, 2017). Therefore, cohabitation is not synonymous with happiness as it does not guarantee happiness. Undergraduates who cohabitate may have low relationship satisfaction and happiness.

Even in examinations, undergraduates who cohabitate may not perform optimally due to the lack of preparation. Time they ought to have used for reading would have been spent on romance and copulation (Jiya & Alhassan, 2019). Cohabitation may also lead to undergraduates dropping out of university, due to poor academic records. Socially, consequences of cohabitation may include heart breaks, depression, emotional disorder, conflicts, drug addiction, high chances of multiple sex partners, unwanted pregnancy, high rate of abortion, sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDs. Therefore, Ojewole and Akinduyo (2017) maintains that cohabitation make undergraduates to be more susceptible to sad events thereby allowing undergraduates to sacrifice their happiness.

The Problem

Cohabitation has been a recurring trend among undergraduates in Nigeria universities. Certain variables may explain the high prevalence of different social issues in Nigerian university campuses. Several of these factors have been considered by different researchers while some are not considered. This implies there are gaps to be filled in literature. One of the variables which may be responsible for these negative outcomes on campuses is cohabitation which has not been well established in literature. The causes and effects of cohabitation on society, education sector and individuals have been analyzed separately. Also, there is paucity of information on undergraduates' perceptions and attitude towards cohabitation in Ogun State.

It is observed that most undergraduates feel it is right to cohabitate with opposite sex because they feel it makes them know their future partner very well. They also feel that sharing the same room with the supposed fiancé would reduce the cost of living. Personal observation also reveals that undergraduates have a positive attitude towards cohabitation because most undergraduates engage in cohabitation. The perception and attitude of undergraduates to co-habitation may be influenced by gender and family income. It is observed that female prefer to live couple's life on campus than male. Hence, the female undergraduates have more tendencies to engage in cohabitation than male undergraduates (Onayose, 2020).

According to Aborisade (2021), the risk exposure of Nigeria's female students in cohabitation is particularly made ominous by their acceptance of violent partners and violence as inevitable realities of romantic relationship. Likewise, undergraduates with high family

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income may have negative perception and attitude towards cohabitation as such undergraduates have sufficient money get separate accommodation and have high standard of living which does not allow for cohabitation compared to undergraduates with low family income who may consider cohabitation as a means of coping with high cost of accommodation and cost of living on campuses (Oladejo & Adenuga, 2022). Studies examining the influence of gender and family income on students' perception and disposition on cohabitation are scanty in Nigerian literature. Hence, the proposed study will investigate the difference in the perception and disposition of undergraduates to cohabitation and it will also consider the causes and effects of cohabitation among undergraduates in Ogun State.

Male and female undergraduates may decide to cohabitate because of accommodation shortage, high cost of accommodation and high level of poverty. Hence, it is observed that cohabitation is becoming an increasingly common stage in courtship, especially for undergraduates in recent times (Ojewole & Akinduyo, 2017). When two undergraduates of opposite sex live together as couples on university campus, there is likelihood of them having lackadaisical attitude towards learning which reduce their academic performance (Onayose, 2020). They may decide to avoid lectures, forget to complete an assignment and refuse to read for examination because of the intimacy they share today, which eventually may lead to poor academic performance.

It is in the light of the gap identified above that the current study was carried out to sociologically analyze cohabitation among Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State with a view of providing solutions to the issues arising from cohabitation.

Research Questions

The following questions were raised to guide the study:

i. What are the perceptions of OOU undergraduates to cohabitation?
ii. What are the perceived factors responsible for cohabitation among the undergraduates in OOU, Ago-Iwoye?
iii. What are the perceived effects of cohabitation among the undergraduates in OOU, Ago-Iwoye?
iv. What are the perceived solutions to the problems of cohabitation among the undergraduates in OOU, Ago-Iwoye?

Literature Review

The state of accommodation in most Nigerian University system is at state of comatose. Most students live under unpalatable conditions on campuses (Duyilemi et al., 2018). They live in accommodation facilities with poor hygiene, congested and overcrowded. This does not support effective learning. Students are now jam-packed in a single room like sardines. Less than forty percent of undergraduates have slot for campus accommodation (Kalu et al., 2021). According to Oladejo and Adenuga (2023), fifteen students shared the same room in some public universities, while in some universities the number of students sharing one big room increase to twenty-four from the previous number of ten. As a result of increase in the number of students that squat their friends, the number of students sharing a room rose tremendously. Thus, rooms are often choked up with wear, buys, and beguiles, resulting in less space for chairs and desks, making the rooms inadequate for personal study.

More so, cohabitation among undergraduates in Nigerian university has contributed to erosion of moral uprightness among undergraduates and youths (Kasim & Falola, 2017). Cohabitation among female and male undergraduates have different effects. One of these effects is the high rate of abortion among female undergraduates (Adeniyi, 2019). This is so because most of the cohabitating female students are impregnated by their male counterpart

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when they are largely unprepared to become parents. Hence, they resorted to abortion which in return cuts short their lives or causes high damages to their reproductive organs.

According to Adeniyi (2019), it is not uncommon to find both female and male undergraduates cohabitating with STDs. Hence, cohabitation encourages stealing, lying and cybercrime, as the partners strive to raise funds to maintain the relationship. In most cases, the female undergraduates in cohabitation relationship, often abuse and molest their male partners whenever they disagree on certain issues. This may lead to trauma and distress which could have adverse effect on their health and education. It is also believed that the majority of undergraduates who cohabitate hardly graduate with better grades as a result of lack of time to study. Most of them sometimes withdraw from school, while some others spend longer years in school to rewrite carryover and spillover courses.

While appraising the causes and consequences of cohabitation among undergraduates in Adamawa state, Fareo and Moses (2018) concluded that many undergraduates engaged in cohabitation because of financial problem, high disposition towards intimacy and regular sex, and absence of conducive accommodation. They also found that cohabitation among undergraduates was high because of harsh rules and regulations in hostel accommodation on campuses. Likewise, it was found that cohabitation improved the chances of STDs, low academic grades, prostitution, and overdue studentship, involvement in abortion, death, depressing and suicidal ideation, attempt, and suicide itself.

Iyekolo (2021), while investigating determinants of cohabitation among undergraduates in University of Ilorin, with the use of descriptive survey design, questionnaire, t-test and correlation analysis, found factors responsible for cohabitation among undergraduates to include: reduction in loneliness, improvement of academic performance, moral obligations, encouragement of peer reading. They also found significant gender, faculty, and academic level difference in the factors accounting for cohabitation among undergraduates in the University of Ilorin. Likewise, undergraduates did not differ in their perception of factors contributing to cohabitation among undergraduates based on their age bracket.

In the same vein, Onayase (2020), while appraising the causes and effects of cohabitation among undergraduates in Oyo State, used a questionnaire to collect primary data from participant undergraduates. Data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and ANOVA. It was found that increase in campus accommodation fees, financial issues, high cost of living, and freedom from parental control and supervision were found to be factors responsible for high rate of cohabitation among undergraduates. The researchers found unwanted pregnancy and unsafe abortion were consequences of cohabitation among undergraduates. They also found insignificant differences among Federal, State and Private university undergraduates' perception towards the consequences of cohabitation.

Adeniyi (2019) studied the consequences of cohabitation and its influence on undergraduates' academic achievement in Nigeria. Using quantitative approach through collection of primary data via questionnaire and analysis of the resulting data using regression analysis, it was found that cohabitation had negative impact on the academic performance of undergraduates in Nigeria.

Using descriptive survey and quantitative approach, Duyilemi, Tunde-Awe and Lois (2018) appraised the reasons for cohabitation among undergraduate of Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria. The study sampled 250 undergraduates using simple random sampling techniques. Primary data obtained through questionnaire were analyzed using frequency count and percentage analysis. Result revealed that rate of cohabitation among undergraduates was between 25% and 50%, indicating that cohabitation was a problem among university undergraduates. Likewise, high moral decadence, health issues and poor achievement were found to be consequences of cohabitation, hence, it was concluded

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that cohabitation contributed negatively to moral, health and academic development of undergraduates. Consequently, parents were advised to monitor their children through constant and regular visits in school to reduce the issues of cohabitation. Likewise, university authorities need to ensure maximum provision of adequate accommodation and engage in proper counseling of undergraduates on issues relating to marriage, to curb the attendant problems associated with cohabitation.

In Kenya, Wamukoya (2018) determined the prevalence of cohabitation among the youths. The study was conducted to appraise church teachings on chastity and identification of variables encouraging cohabitation among youths. The study was guided by Social Learning Theory by Albert Bandura. 210 Catholic church youths and church leaders were randomly sampled from five parishes. Questionnaire, interview and focus group discussions were used as instruments for data collection. Data were analyzed using frequencies, simple percentage analysis, mean and Chi-Square through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17. Results showed that chastity was taught by Catholic Church as a sacrament. It was also revealed that a significant association existed between chastity and cohabitation. It was also found that large number of youths engaged in cohabitation, indicating high occurrence of cohabitation practices among Catholic church youth. Reasons for cohabitation were found to include family influence, peers influence and level of education. It was also revealed that unemployment contributed to high incidence of cohabitation among youth.

Examining the susceptibility of undergraduates to cohabitation, Ojewola and Akinduyo (2017) appraised factors responsible for high prevalence of cohabitation among undergraduates in Ondo State, Nigeria. 450 undergraduates were sampled using random sampling technique. The questionnaire tagged, "Prevalence and Factors of Cohabitation among Undergraduates Questionnaire" was used to collect primary data for the study. Data were analyzed using ANOVA and t test. Results indicated that undergraduates did not differ statistically on the perception towards cohabitation according to their age and faculties. However, significant difference was found in the perception of undergraduates towards cohabitation based on religious affiliation. Hence, the study recommended adequate and regular counseling for undergraduates to inculcate moral standards into them. Likewise, parents and University management are advised to reduce cohabitation issues among undergraduates through the provision of suitable, conducive, and affordable accommodation.

In Bayelsa state, Uzobo and Ugho (2017) appraised the divorce revolution and prevalence of cohabitation. This study was designed to investigate the pattern of cohabitation through identification of personal variables of divorcees and cohabiters. It also investigated the determinants, and prevalence of cohabitation, appraising the connection between divorce and cohabitation prevalence. This study was anchored on modernization theory and rational choice. Using cross-sectional correlational designs, 400 adult men and women were sampled in three areas of Yenegoa with the use of probability and non-probability sampling techniques. Primary data collected through questionnaire administered on the participants of the study were analyzed using frequency count, simple percentage analysis, logistics regression and correlation. Results showed that age played a significant role in cohabitation, modernization was responsible for high wave of cohabitation in Bayelsa, and divorce did not statistically contribute to high incidence of cohabitation in Bayelsa.

In Ebonyi, Nigeria, Imo (2017) conducted his study on increased rate of cohabitation among undergraduates. This study was specifically conducted among the undergraduates of Ebonyi State University. Cross-sectional design was used to collect and analyze data though the use of questionnaire and interview methods and percentage analysis. Result showed low incidence of cohabitation among the undergraduates of Ebonyi State University. This was because of the prevalence of cohabitation was found to be 11 percent. Reasons for cohabitation

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among the undergraduates were: sexual gratification; mutual assistance, competition, poverty, peer pressure and accommodation related issues. On this basis, it was advisable for the government to intervene in the school affairs through reduction in school fees, provision of adequate accommodation.

In Ibadan, Nigeria, Arisikwu (2013) determined the rate of cohabitation among undergraduates in the University of Ibadan. Rational Choice Theory provided the needed theoretical backing for this study. The study was conducted among the full-time undergraduates. This study adopted triangular approach, in which quantitative and qualitative approach were used for this study. 300 participants were sampled using convenience sampling technique. Result revealed that cohabitation was common among the undergraduates of the University of Ibadan which was largely due to insufficient accommodation, roommates' problems, absence of privacy and sexual intimacy with lovers.

Theoretical Review

The Social Learning Theory as propounded by Alberto Bandura in 1977 provides theoretical explanations on the prevalence, causes and consequences of cohabitation being investigated by this study.

Social Learning Theory (SLT)

The Social Learning Theory (SLT) developed by Bandura (1977) provides theoretical backings to this study. The theory believes that cohabitation ideas are influenced by individual experience. The theory maintains that learnt behavior becomes attitude and in return attitude becomes habits. Social learning is all about reinforcement of the right behavior or extinguishing inordinate behavior using carrot (reward) and stick (punishment) approach. It explains how individuals model their behaviors towards other people's behavior while interacting with other people. Initially, individual imitates and models others' behaviors at the same time, however, with constant and continuous reinforcement, behavioral patterns is maintained and developed (Adisa & Oladejo, 2022).

The SLT provides adequate explanation and understanding of how male and female undergraduates and youths in general acquire sexual behavior through their interaction with others in the social environment. The issue of cohabitation occurs because of bi-mutual benefits acting as reinforcers. Social approval obtained by undergraduates cohabitating on campuses is responsible for high prevalence of cohabitation and other related sexual behaviors among undergraduates.

Application of Social Learning Theory (SLT) to the Study

SLT provides better understanding on the relationship between individual social interaction and how individual learnt behavior via interactions and associations. The theory sees cohabitation among undergraduates as a learnt behavior from peers, close friends and members of family who also engaged in such behavior. Hence, the theory identifies the causes of cohabitation to include peer influence, social pressure, economic issues, and cultural influence which this study is set out to identify. Also, the theory assumes that learning through others in social context comes with the good and the bad. Hence, cohabitation, as a social learning issue, portends some benefits and problems. Some of the problems arising from cohabitation according to this theory are depression, possibility of suicide, sexually transmitted diseases, among others, which this study is set to examine.

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Methodology

Ex-post facto design of descriptive survey type was employed for this study. The study was conducted among the undergraduates of Olabisi Onabanjo University in Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State. The target population of this study was 913 OOU undergraduates in departments of Sociology, Mass Communication and Accounting Department. The study focused on the 300 and 400 level undergraduates of the three departments in the study area.

Three sampling techniques were employed for this study. These techniques included systematic, proportional and convenience sampling. The first stage of sampling involved sample size determination using the systematic sampling through Taro Yamane sample size determination formula. This was done to provide logical explanation on the sample size used for the study. The second stage of sampling involved the use of proportional sampling technique to determine the sample size for each department. This was to allow the research to select undergraduates from each department in relation to their population. The third stage involved the use of convenience sampling technique to draw participants from the study area. This technique allowed the researcher to select undergraduates based on their accessibility and availability for the study. Thus, giving a total of two hundred and twenty-six (226) undergraduates as the sample size.

Data was collected for this study with the aid of self-designed questionnaire and were analyzed using frequency count and simple percentage analysis through Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS) version 21.

Results

Data Presentation, Analysis, and Interpretation

The results are presented sequentially in the order of demographic data of participants, research questions and discussion of major findings.

Sociodemographic Data of Participant Undergraduates

Details	**Frequency**	**%**
Gender:		
Male	113	51.4
Female	107	48.6
Total	**220**	**100.0**
Age:		
18-22	104	47.3
23-27	106	48.2
Above 28	10	4.5
Total	**220**	**100.0**
Department:		
Sociology	72	32.7
Mass Communication	74	33.6
Accounting	74	33.6
Total	**220**	**100.0**
Level:		
300	109	49.5
400	111	50.5
Total	**220**	**100.0**
Religion:		

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Christianity	129	58.6
Islam	91	41.4
Total	**220**	**100.0**
Ethnicity:		
Yoruba	138	62.7
Igbo	78	35.5
Hausa	4	1.8
Total	**220**	**100.0**

Table 1. Results on Demographic Data of Undergraduates
Source: Researcher's Fieldwork (2023)

Table 1 revealed that more male undergraduates (51.4%) participated in the study than female undergraduates (48.6%). More so, undergraduates who were 23-27 years (48.2%), participated the most in the study, followed by those between 18-22 years (47.3%) while those above 28 years (4.5%) had the least participation in the study. In term of departments, Sociology undergraduates had the least participation (32.7%) while Accounting undergraduates (33.6%) and Mass Communication undergraduates (33.6%) participated equally in this study. Likewise, 50.5% of the respondents were 400 level undergraduates while 300 level undergraduates constituted 49.5%. Also, Christian undergraduates (58.6%) participated more in the study than Muslim undergraduates (41.4%). Yoruba undergraduates (62.7%) had the highest level of participation in the study, followed by Igbo undergraduates (35.5) while Hausa undergraduates (1.8%) had the least participation.

Research Questions

1.What are the perceptions of Olabisi Onabanjo University undergraduates to cohabitation?

Items	**Yes**	**%**	**No**	**%**
I think people of opposite sex should live together even before marriage.	167	75.9	53	24.1
I am willing to share the same room with my future partner on campus due to accommodation problem.	153	69.5	67	30.5
I believe cohabitation is the order of the day on campuses.	143	65.0	77	35.0
I am of the opinion that living with my partner would bring us closer.	139	63.2	81	36.8
I have no problem with living together before marriage.	115	52.3	105	47.7

Table 2. Undergraduates' Perceptions on Cohabitation
Source: Researcher's Fieldwork (2023)

Table 2 indicated that 75.9% of the participant undergraduates agreed that people of opposite sex should live together even before marriage with 69.5% of the participant undergraduates agreeing that they were willing to share the same room with their future partner on campus due to accommodation problem. In the same vein, 65.0% of the participant undergraduates agreed that cohabitation was the order of the day on campus, 63.2% of the participant undergraduates agreed that living together with their partner would foster closeness, and 52.3% of the total participants agreed that they had no problem living together before

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marriage. This means that undergraduates in this study have positive perception on cohabitation on campuses.

2: What are the perceived factors responsible for cohabitation among the undergraduates in Olabisi Onabanjo University?

Items	**Yes**	**%**	**No**	**%**
Do you think students live together due to higher fees?	178	80.9	42	19.1
Do you think undergraduates engage in cohabitation just to understudy their partners for marriage?	139	63.2	81	36.8
Do you think high incidence of cohabitation among undergraduates is as a result of sexual gratification?	82	37.3	138	62.7
Do you think loss of religious inclination is responsible for high prevalence of cohabitation among undergraduates?	125	56.8	95	43.2
Does freedom from parental supervision account for high rate of cohabitation among undergraduates?	141	64.1	79	35.9

Table 3. Perceived Factors Responsible for Cohabitation among Undergraduates
Source: Researcher's Fieldwork (2023)

The result in **Table 3** revealed that 80.9% of the study's participants believed that students lived together due to higher fees, 63.2% agreed that undergraduates engaged in cohabitation to understudy their partners for marriage while 62.7% disagreed with the statement that sexual gratification was responsible for high wave of cohabitation among undergraduates. Also, 56.8% of the respondents agreed that loss of religious inclination encouraged cohabitation among undergraduates and 64.1% agreed that freedom from parental supervision was responsible for high incidence of cohabitation among undergraduates. Based on the above, this study found that high fees, propensity to get to know one's partner, loss of religious inclination and freedom from parental supervision were reasons undergraduates engaged in cohabitation. Only a few (37.3%) believed that sexual gratification was a predisposing factor for cohabitation among undergraduates.

3. What are the perceived effects of cohabitation among the undergraduates in Olabisi Onabanjo University?

Items	**Yes**	**%**	**No**	**%**
Do you think cohabitation has eroded level of morality on campus?	141	64.1	79	35.9
Does cohabitation improve the chances of contacting Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)?	143	65.0	77	35.0
Do you believe that high level of abortion is ascribed to the high prevalence of cohabitation among undergraduates?	115	52.3	105	47.7
Does cohabitation increase the chances of female undergraduates having unplanned, unwanted or unintended pregnancy?	178	80.9	42	19.1
Do you believe cohabitation is responsible for high incidence of relationship related frustration and depression?	122	55.5	98	44.5

Table 4. Perceived Effects of Cohabitation among Undergraduates
Source: Researcher's Fieldwork (2023)

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Table 4 revealed that 64.1% of the participants agreed that cohabitation breed immorality among undergraduates, 65.0% of the participants believed that cohabitation encouraged transmission of STDs, 52.3% agreed that cohabitation increased the chances of high rate of abortion among undergraduates. 80.9% of the participants agreed that cohabitation increased unwanted pregnancy among female undergraduates while 19.1% disagreed and 55.5% of the respondents agreed that cohabitation is responsible for high incidence of depression and frustrated relationship. The result showed that cohabitation has a lot of effects on undergraduates which include high incidence of immorality, increased spread of STDs, high level of abortion among undergraduates, increased incidence of unwanted pregnancy and high prevalence of relationship related frustration and depression. All these are considered negative effects.

4. What are the perceived solutions to the problems of cohabitation among the undergraduates in Olabisi Onabanjo University?

Items	**Yes**	**%**	**No**	**%**
Do you think reduction in school fees would reduce the prevalence of cohabitation among undergraduates?	153	69.5	67	30.5
Do you believe adequate housing provision on campuses would reduce cohabitation among undergraduates?	147	66.8	73	33.2
Do you think reduction in the cost of living would reduce the incidence cohabitation among undergraduates?	139	63.2	81	36.8
Do you think strong and increased religious practices would reduce the rate at which undergraduates of opposite sex living under the same roof?	136	62.8	84	38.2
Do you think indoctrination of African culture on marriage would reduce the occurrence of cohabitation among undergraduates?	172	78.2	48	21.8

Table 5. Perceived Solutions to the Problems of Cohabitation among Undergraduates
Source: Researcher's Fieldwork (2023)

The result in **Table 5** showed that the majority of the undergraduates who participated in the study were of the opinion that prevalence of cohabitation among undergraduates would subside if school fees were reduced (69.5%), if there are adequate housing provision on campuses (68.8%) and reduction in the cost of living (63.2%). Also, 62.8% of the participants agreed that strong and increased religious practices would reduce the rate at which undergraduates of opposite sex living under the same roof while 78.2% of the total respondents believed that indoctrination of African culture on marriage would reduce the occurrence of cohabitation among undergraduates. This means that the perceived solutions to cohabitation included: school fees reduction; provision of accommodation; reduction in cost of living; strong and increased religious practices and indoctrination of African culture on marriage.

Discussion of Findings

The purpose of this study was to conduct a sociological analysis of cohabitation among students in Ogun State. The study was conducted among the undergraduates of Olabisi Onabanjo University (OOU) and it was guided by four objectives which included: investigating undergraduates' perceptions on cohabitation; assessing the perceived factors responsible for

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cohabitation; assessing the perceived effects of cohabitation and proffering solutions to the problems arising from cohabitation among the OOU undergraduates in, Ago-Iwoye.

From the socio-demographic variables of the undergraduates who participated in the study, it showed that more male undergraduates participated in the study than female undergraduates. Likewise, most of the participant undergraduates were 23-27 years across three departments (Sociology, Mass Communication and Accounting). They were mostly 300 level students, Christians, and Yoruba undergraduates. This result indicated that the undergraduates in the study had varying degree of personal characteristics needed to participate in the study of this magnitude.

Result indicated that OOU undergraduates had positive perception towards cohabitation, indicating that they had better knowledge and understanding on cohabitation due to its high-level engagement of undergraduates in cohabitation on the campus. Their perceptions ranged from positive knowledge on undergraduates living pattern; willingness to share room with their partner; belief that cohabitation is rampant on campus; and belief that living with their partner would bring them together. This result supported the findings of Ekpenyong and Ekpenyong (2016); Adeniyi (2019); Muhinat (2022); Onayose (2020) and Iyekolo (2021) who maintained that undergraduates had positive perception on cohabitation. Meanwhile, the Jiya and Alhassan (2019) reported negative knowledge of undergraduates towards cohabitation.

More so, this current study found that high fees, propensity to get to know one's partner, loss of religious inclination and freedom from parental supervision were factors responsible for high prevalence of cohabitation among OOU undergraduates. This result gave credence to the findings of Jiya and Alhassan (2019); Svodziwa and Kurete (2017); Kalu, Ejiogu, Chukwukadibia and Nleoma, (2021); Ojewole and Akinduyo (2017) and Gault-Sherman and Drapen (2012) who concluded that students engaged in cohabitation as a result of several factors which included: lack of parental control; loss of African belief on marriage; loss of religious inclination; sexual gratification; high cost of living among others.

Furthermore, results indicated that cohabitation had negative effects on the students, like high incidence of immorality, increased spread of STDs, high level of abortion among undergraduates, increased incidence of unwanted pregnancy and high prevalence of relationships related to frustration and depression. The result supported the claims of Kalu, Ejiogu, Chukwukadibia and Nleoma, (2021); Duyilemi et al. (2018); Ojewole and Akinduyo (2017); Adeniyi (2019); Kasim and Falola (2017) who maintained that high wave of cohabitation is responsible for relationship related depression and frustration leading to suicidal ideation, increased spread of STDs, and high prevalence of unintended pregnancy leading to unsafe abortion and consequential loss of live.

Likewise, this study found that the issue of cohabitation could be minimized if not eradicated through school fees reduction; provision of accommodation; reduction in cost of living; increased religious practices and indoctrination of African culture on marriage. These suggestions were equally made by other researchers such as Ekpenyong and Ekpenyong (2016); Adeniyi (2019); Muhinat (2022); Onayose (2020) and Iyekolo (2021); Adeniyi (2019); Kasim and Falola (2017) who all believed that more needed to be done to solve the problems created by high prevalence of cohabitation among undergraduates.

Conclusion

Consequent upon the major findings of this study, it was concluded that cohabitation was commonly practiced by majority of undergraduates in the study area. This was evident in that most of the participants attested to the widespread of the living pattern among undergraduates on campuses. Likewise, undergraduates had positive knowledge on

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undergraduates living pattern; they were predisposed to cohabitation as a result of their willingness to share the same room with their partner and that it improved bonding among partners.

This study also concluded that cohabitation had negative effects on the undergraduates, and it increased the incidence of immoral acts undergraduates; it was also found to be responsible for increase in the rate of STDs among undergraduates, unprecedented level of abortion, high cases of suicides arising from relationship related frustrations, distress, depression and hopelessness among undergraduates.

Also, this study concluded that problems arising from cohabitation among undergraduates could be probably solved if the school management see to downward review of the school feels, provide adequate and conducive hostel facilities; and encourage strong and increased religious practices among undergraduates which abhor pre-marital sex among two unmarried couples thereby reducing the incidence of cohabitation among undergraduates. It was also concluded that encouraging undergraduates to imbibe the African culture which discourage two unmarried couples living together in whatever form is one of the panaceas to eradicate cohabitation among undergraduates.

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