

PERCEPTION OF STUDENTS TOWARDS PEER PRESSURE INFLUENCE AND COHABITATION IN A COLLEGE OF EDUCATION IN ONDO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated perception of students towards peer pressure influence and cohabitation in a college of education in Ondo State, Nigeria. The study adopted the non-experimental research design involving descriptive survey type of research. The study used a sample of 300 students selected through the use of stratified and simple random sampling techniques from a federal college of education in Ondo State. The instrument titled peer pressure influence and cohabitation questionnaire was used for the data collection. The data collected were analysed through frequency count, percentage and Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The results showed that majority of the students perceived peer pressure as influential to cohabitational behaviour among the students. The results further indicated that significant relationship existed between students perceptions of peer pressure influence and cohabitation ($r = 0.362$; $r\text{-tab} = 0.195$). Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that college of education students did not perceived cohabitation among unmarried college of education students as abnormal behaviour to the society rather they are fully in support of cohabitation among unmarried students, hence, it was recommended that cohabitation among unmarried college of education students must be controlled through legislation to prevent ridicule to the institution of marriage.

Introduction

Students may be regarded as group of people comprising male or female persons or both male and female enrolled to learn in institution of learning. It has been observed that right from young age under six years, children are observed to associate together in groups. As they associate together, they appear to pursue common goals and at times, it is often observed that member of the groups or associate seem to pressurize each other to carry out activities or influence their friends to achieve what is of interest to their friends which they delight in. At times a member may not really be interested in carrying out an activity but colleagues or member of group may tend to coerce such a person into carrying out the activity. This group of students could be referred to as peers who

pressurize each other to achieve what they want. Peer pressure expresses itself through students especially in higher institutions such as colleges of education, polytechnic and university and even in a lower level of education such as primary and secondary schools. This issue of peer pressure among students is expressed in the area of co-curricular and curricular activities for instance, peers are observed to encourage member into luring themselves into a relationship with others because some of them are already in a relationship with partners. Some member of these peer groups in tertiary institution like college of education do not just limit their relationship to boy friend and girl friend issue but has extended to living together in the same room practicing as husband and wife. This behaviour has been variously termed as campus couple's life or cohabitation. Peers pressurize themselves to engage in cohabitation for the purpose of privacy, sexual satisfaction, protection from molestation and probably for academic purpose. Most students appear to perceive peer pressure as means of achieving their intention while some appear not to give regard to pressure. These students may be as a result of their religious inclination or their home background, abhorred cohabitation while others observed nothing wrong with cohabitation and some viewed it as the order of the day in the tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

The theoretical framework for this study concerned with social learning theory as propounded by Bandura (1977). The theory emphasized spontaneous learning by the learner and through reinforcement and imitation of model. Model here in this study are the peers. Imitation is the reproduction of learned events by the learner through observing other peers already practicing cohabitational acts. These peers already practicing cohabitation served as model for behaviour. Reinforcement could be internal or external and could be positive or negative. Approval from peers is external while feeling satisfied or happy with the approval is internal reinforcement. Bandura, Ross and Ross (1963), argued that the learned behaviour could be strengthened through seeing others been rewarded for performing the learned behaviour. Individuals been applauded, praised, encouraged, and gratified through clapping, handshakes and hugging each other for exhibiting the learned cohabitation behaviour are such vicarious reinforcement. Several studies such as Felmlee (2001), Akanbi (2017) and Fareo and Moses (2018) have carried out researches on determinants of cohabitation.

In the formation of attitude and behaviour towards opposite sex especially among youngsters in higher institutions, researches have held peer socialization as very important factor (Cavanaugh, 2007). Peers may control or influence colleague individual in deciding whether or not to cohabit with opposite sex.

Akanbi (2017), in a study of influence of religion, parenting style and peer attachment on attitudes toward cohabitational behaviour among tertiary institution students in Oyo State, Nigeria, found out that among the three predictor variables, peers attachment contributed 14.7 % to cohabitation while religiosity contributed 33.4% to cohabitation among the students. Akanbi argued that the contribution of peer attachment 14.7% and religiosity 33.4% to cohabitation showed to be

significant factors in the decision of youngster students towards cohabitation practice in the higher institutions. Fareo and Moses (2018) in a similar study to Akanbi (2017) found out that peer with a means value of 2.51 encourages cohabitation. According to Fareo and Moses, no significant difference existed between male and female undergraduates' attitude toward cohabitation while Jiya and Alhassan (2019) found that peer was one of the potent factors that determine students' participation in cohabitation in higher institutions of learning.

Baxter (2005) argued that persons who cohabit are likely to be high school dropout or higher institution undergraduates who are less religious or traditional. Knox and Schacht (2008), identified money saver cohabiters and security blanket cohabiter as parts or forms of cohabitation relationship. Economic convenience or economic dependence on each other is an attributes of money saver cohabiters while two persons opposite each other in terms of gender or sex role are drawn to each other out of a need for security rather than mutual attraction as described by Knox and Schacht (2008).

Statement of the Problem

Higher institution exists, virtually, in all states in Nigeria with male and female learners interacting with each other. Many of these students are unmarried and many of them make private accommodation arrangements for their conveniences outside their institution campus due to lack of accommodation within their institutions. This gave these students the chance or opportunity to embark on social activity known as cohabitation or campus couple's life which could negatively affect the academic performance of the students or lead them into infatuation, unprotected sex, unwanted pregnancy, abortion, risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases, lack of chastity and purity, promotion of prostitution and devaluation of cultural sexual norms.

The valued tradition of keeping virginity till marriage, the regard and respect for institution of marriage, the maintenance of valued culture and religious norms concerning marriage have all been broken down and prostitution is at increase. Most of these unapproved and non accepted sexual relationships among the undergraduate youngsters are probably becoming encouraged and increased through peer pressure and cohabitation practice. It therefore becomes imperative to investigate perception of students towards peer pressure influence and cohabitation in college of education with a view to reducing the excessive attitudes of youngsters towards promoting undesirable norms within the society.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study, therefore, is to investigate the perception of higher institution students towards peer pressure influence and cohabitation among undergraduate students of college of education in Ondo State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following questions were raised to guide the study

1. What is the perception of college of education students towards cohabitation?

2. What is the students' perception of peer pressure influence on cohabitational behaviour?

3. Is there any relationship between peer pressure influence and cohabitation as perceived by the college of education students?

Methodology

This study adopted the non-experimental research design of the descriptive survey type to capture large sample and good representative of the population for the study to facilitate description of the existing phenomenon of peer pressure and cohabitation among students of college of education in Ondo State. The population for the study consist all the students of College of Education in Ondo State from first year to third year of 2018/2019 academic session. Three hundred students formed the sample for the study. The students have been grouped into first year, second year and third with level of course as strata. Using year of admission of student as basis for strata, 50 male and 50 female students were randomly selected from each of first, second and third year of admission of students into the only public college of education institution in Ondo State.

The research instrument titled "Peer Pressure Influence and Cohabitation Questionnaire" used for the study consisted peer pressure inventory adapted from Brown and Clasen (1986) and cohabitation inventory developed by the researchers. The instrument consists three sections (A, B, C). Section 'A' sought information on respondents bio-data, section 'B' (peer pressure inventory) sought information on perception of students on peer pressure influence on member of peer group towards cohabitation and section 'C' which was a structured questionnaire was developed on perception of cohabitation among students. It is a 4 point likert format scale bearing highly true (4 points), partially true (3 point), rarely true (2 points) and not true (1 point). The validity of the instrument was carried out based on construct validity technique of internal consistency analysis (to determine the extent to which the items of the instrument hanged together). The instrument was trial tested using 20 students of College of Education, Ikere-Ekiti in Ekiti State who were non-participants in this study. The scores from the responses of these 20 students on each of the section B and C were correlated with the total score on the whole instrument to establish the internal consistency. The obtained coefficient showed that peer pressure inventory had an 'r' coefficient value of 0.67 while the cohabitation inventory indicated a coefficient 'r' value of 0.62. These coefficient alpha values (0.67 and 0.62) showed the items homogeneity and according to Akinboye (2000), the coefficient alpha value obtained from internal consistency analysis is a proof of the extent of the construct validity of an instrument. The test-retest method of reliability was also carried out on same 20 sample respondents twice at interval of two weeks and the result obtained, when the two set of scores were subjected to Pearson Product Moment Correlation, showed coefficient 'r' value of 0.78 which is significant at 0.05 level of significance, hence the instrument is considered reliable enough.

The instrument was administered by hand to the respondents during lecture time by the researchers who were assisted by three lecturers handling a general course in each of first, second and third year

of students' course of study while teaching the general courses. The instrument was retrieved from the students immediately after completing the questionnaire before the end of the lecture. The responses were scored, collated and subjected to analysis using frequency count, percentage and Pearson Product Moment Correlation.

Results

Research Question 1

What is the perception of students of college of education towards cohabitation?

Table 1: Perception of college of education students toward cohabitation

| | Items | Response | Highly true | Partially true | Rarely true | Not true |
|---|--|----------|---------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1 | Cohabitation is a best alternative to lack of hostel accommodation | 300 | 191 (63.67 %) | 40 (13.33 %) | 15 (5.0 %) | 54 (18.0%) |
| 2 | Cohabitation is economical in terms of finance | 300 | 155 (51.67%) | 60 (20.0%) | 10 (3.33 %) | 75 (25.0%) |
| 3 | Cohabitation provides intimate companionship | 300 | 128 (42.67 %) | 75 (25.0%) | 42 (14.0%) | 55 (18.33%) |
| 4 | Cohabitation provides protection against molestation | 300 | 48 (16.0%) | 150 (50.0%) | 22 (7.33%) | 80 (26.67%) |
| 5 | Cohabitation arrangement provides privacy | 300 | 186 (62.0%) | 102 (34.0%) | 4 (1.33%) | 8 (2.67%) |
| 6 | Cohabitation provides academic assistance | 300 | 32 (10.67%) | 110 (36.67%) | 91 (30.33%) | 67 (22.33%) |
| 7 | Cohabitation is a means of providing sexual satisfaction | 300 | 212 (70.67%) | 65 (21.67%) | 15 (5.0%) | 8 (2.66%) |

Table I showed that most students (191 + 40) = 231 with a percentage of 77 looked at cohabitation as the best alternative to lack of hostel accommodation while the remaining 70 (15+54) 23 % admired other avenue as alternative to accommodation. Majority of the students (155 +60 =215) 71.67 % perceived cohabitation as very economical in term of providing financial support or reducing expenses for students while 85 (10 +75) respondents representing 28.33 % did not see it as means of providing financial support or reducing students' expenses . Two hundred and three students (128 + 75 = 203) representing 67.67% claimed that cohabitation is a means of providing companionship while 97 (32.33%) of the respondents did not see cohabitation as truly a source of provision for companionship. One hundred and ninety eight (198= 48+150 = 66%) perceived cohabitation as means of providing protection against molestation; two hundred and eighty eight (288=186+102; = 96%) perceived cohabitation as means of providing privacy; 142 (32+110; = 47.34%) perceived cohabitation as means of providing academic assistance 277 (212+65; 92.34%) perceived cohabitation as means of providing sexual satisfaction. One hundred and fifty eight students (91+67=52.66%) against 142 (32+110, = 47.34%) respondents claimed that cohabitation do not

really provide academic assistance. From the data on table 1, it could be observed that the perception of most of the respondents is favourable to cohabitation.

Research Question 2

What is the student perception of peer pressure influence on cohabitational behaviour?

Table 2: Frequency and percentage of students' perception of peer pressure influence on cohabitational behaviour

| S/N | | N | Highly True | Partially True | Rarely True | Not True |
|-----|--|-----|-------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|
| 8. | friends compel each other to cohabit with opposite sex | 300 | 123 (41.0%) | 150 (50.0%) | 9 (3.0%) | 18 (6.0%) |
| 9. | friend influenced each other to share room and bed with opposite sex partners | 300 | 71 (23.67%) | 73 (24.33%) | 75 (25.0%) | 81 (27.0%) |
| 10. | my group encourage each others to do things to impress the significant cohabitating partner only | 300 | 135 (45.0%) | 123 (41.0%) | 15 (5.0%) | 27 (9.0%) |
| 11. | my associates do not advise me to spend my time indoor with my cohabitating sex partner | 300 | 55 (18.0%) | 72 (24.0%) | 79 (26.33%) | 95 (31.67%) |
| 12. | my associates influenced me to go out with my cohabiting sex partner only | 300 | 84 (28.0%) | 66 (22.0%) | 86 (28.67%) | 64 (21.33%) |

The table 2 indicated the students' perception of peer group influence on cohabitational behaviour. The table 2 showed that the responses to item 8 indicated that 273= 123+150; 91% of the students indicated that friends compel each other to be involved in living together and sharing the same bed together by unmarried female and male students while only twenty seven (9+18, = 9.0 %) of the students said that it is not true. However, item 9 showed that 156 (75+81) representing 52 % of the respondents were of the opinion that friends cannot coerce them into cohabitational behaviour whereas 144 (71+73=48.0%) respondents perceived that friends could actually lure each other into cohabitation in the school. Item 10 showed that two hundred and fifty eight 258 (135 + 123) = 86.0% respondents agreed that peer group members encourage each other to do things to impress the significant cohabitating partner only while 42 (14%) of the respondents opined that peer group members do not encourage anyone to do things to impress the cohabitating partner only. Also item 11 showed that 174 =79+95 representing (58%) respondents claimed it is not true that associates do not give advice on spending time indoor with individual's cohabitating sex partner only while 127=55+72 which represent (42%) had a contrary view as they indicated that peers do not give advice to members on how to spend time indoor with individual's cohabiting sex partner only. The responses of virtually more than half of the respondents showed that the peer pressure influence on members' cohabitational behaviour is high while less than half are not fully bordered whether a

member goes out with cohabiting sex partner only or with another opposite sex

Research Question 3

Is there any relationship between peer pressure influence and cohabitation as perceived by the college of education students?

In answering this research question, it was converted to hypothesis thus: there is no significant relationship between college of education students' perception of peer pressure influence and cohabitation.

Table 3: test of significant relationship between peer pressure influence and cohabitation as perceived by college of education students.

| Variable | N | r-cal. | r-crit. |
|-------------------------|-----|--------|---------|
| Peer pressure influence | 300 | 0.362 | 0.195 |
| Cohabitation | 300 | | |

$P < 0.05$ (significant result)

From table 3, it is observed that the calculated value of correlation coefficient 'r' was 0.362 while r-critical was 0.195. This implied that the r-calculated value (0.362) is greater than the r-critical value (0.195) hence the hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between peer pressure influence and cohabitation as perceived by the college of education students is rejected. By implication, there was a significant relationship between peer pressure influence and cohabitation as perceived by the college of education students.

Discussion

The foregoing has showed the results of this study.

The research question one sought to find out the perception of college of education students towards cohabitation in college of education. The responses of the sampled students showed that the students solidly favoured and supported cohabitation. This finding supported the findings of Ojewole and Akinduyo (2017) and Duyilemi, etal (2018) that students of tertiary institutions are greatly engrossed with positive attitude towards cohabitation syndrome. This finding may be so because these higher institution students often have opportunities to mingle and discuss with each other happenings in their various institutions

The responses of the students to research question two showed that the peer group pressure has been very influential to cohabitation among the students. This finding agreed with the assertion of Famade (2001) that members of a group tend to influence each other due to similarity of purpose. The findings are likely to be so due to the students' interest and pressure to engage in funs and interest in reduction of economic over burden.

The research question three that was converted to hypothesis showed that the hypothesis was rejected. This finding is similar to the findings of the study of Akanbi (2017) that there was a significant relationship among peer attachment, religiosity, parenting styles and cohabitation. This finding may be so because these students have similarity of purpose in the various tertiary

institutions when it comes to extra-curricula activities.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that college of education students do not see anything wrong with cohabitation among the unmarried students rather they perceived that peer pressure influence is a potent factor to inducing the practice of cohabitation and do not want their interest on cohabitation to be undermined among unmarried college of education students. Therefore, it was recommended that cohabitation among unmarried colleges of education students must be controlled through legislation to prevent ridicule to the much cherished, valued chastity and virginity of the females in the institution of marriage and within the society and the religious institutions at large to stamp out increase in prostitution in the society

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