

**PERCEPTION, ATTITUDE AND PRACTICE OF CO-HABITATION
AMONG STUDENTS OF THE POLYTECHNIC,
IBADAN, NIGERIA**

BY

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the almighty God who has been my source and helped me triumph over all difficulties encountered during my study. I am forever indebted to His goodness.

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ABSTRACT

A revolution in sexual values has led to the emergence of co-habitation among unmarried youths in many Nigerian communities. Co-habitation has been observed as a predisposing factor to the initiation of premarital sexual activities among students of tertiary institutions. The sexuality and reproductive health practices of youths are of public health importance. Previous studies on co-habitation have focused mostly on marriage instability with limited focus on perception, attitude and practice of co-habitation in tertiary institutions. Hence, this study was carried out to assess the perception, attitude and practice of co-habitation among students of The Polytechnic, Ibadan, Nigeria.

A descriptive cross-sectional study design using a two-stage sampling technique was used to select 16 out of 32 departments and 410 out of 8407 students from all five faculties. Students were stratified into females and males, 168 females out of 3423 and 242 males out of 4984 from the departments were selected proportionately. A self-administered questionnaire was used to elicit information on respondents' socio-demographic characteristics, perception, attitude, and practice of co-habitation. Perception was measured on a 30-point scale; scores of ≤ 14 and > 14 were categorised as negative and positive, respectively. Attitude towards co-habitation was measured on a 30-point scale; scores ≤ 14 were categorised as "negative attitude" and > 14 as "positive attitude". In-depth interviews (IDIs) were conducted among four male and four female participants using an IDI guide. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics and Chi-square at $p = 0.05$. Qualitative data were analysed thematically.

Respondents' age was 21.8 ± 3.0 years and 59.3% were males. Thirty-eight percent of respondents reported sexual relationship as the main reason for co-habitation. Majority (82.0%) had positive perception (20.1 ± 5.0) towards co-habitation. Also 89.3% had positive attitude (21.0 ± 4.5) towards co-habitation. About a quarter (23.2%) had ever practised co-habitation, 34.6% reported that their friends were co-habiting while 11.6% were in co-habiting relationships at the time of the study. Reported consequences of co-habitation included unwanted pregnancy (92.0%), abortion (92.0%), sexually transmitted infections (88.5%) and teen childbearing (88.0%). Majority (87.3%) of the respondents reported that they would not recommend co-habitation to anyone. Factors promoting co-habitation

included peer influence (72.2%), high cost of living on campus (68.5%), being in a romantic relationship (67.1%), and desire for sex on a regular basis (66.6%). Positive perception of the effect of co-habitation was reported by 72.2% of respondents while 83.9% reported that premarital sex is paramount in a co-habiting relationship. There was a significant association between perception of co-habitation and respondents' sex, with more males (56.5%) having a positive perception. Age of respondents was significantly associated with the practice of co-habitation. Majority of the in-depth interviewees reported that co-habitation gives room to test compatibility before marriage, satisfy sexual urge, and to avoid having multiple sexual partners.

The Polytechnic Ibadan students had positive perception of, and attitude to co-habitation. Peer influence was a major factor promoting respondents' practice of co-habitation despite the perceived consequences that pose threat to their health. Peer education programme within tertiary institutions is recommended to educate students on sex and family life issues.

Keywords: Co-habitation, Polytechnic students, Premarital sex, Unmarried youths

Word count: 499

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this study was carried out by OLANIRAN, OLASUNBO
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	-	Acquire immune deficiency syndrome
HIV	-	Human immunodeficiency Virus
HND	-	Higher National Diploma
ND	-	National Diploma
NGO	-	Non-Governmental Organisations
NLSY	-	National Longitudinal Survey of Youth
NSFG	-	National Survey of Family Growth
PEPs	-	Peer Education Programmes
STIs	-	Sexually Transmitted Infections
WHO	-	World Health Organisation

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Co-habitation: refers to residence of a couple in a shared household, with mutual sexual access, but without legal sanction; essentially an informal marriage (Coltrane and Collins, 2001).

Marriage: the state of being united to a person of the opposite sex as husband and wife in a consensual and contractual relationship recognised by law.

Health: is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

Youth: is a socially constructed intermediary phase of life, but often means the time between childhood and adulthood.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Co-habitation, otherwise known as 'living together', has become increasingly common in both developed and developing (Kiernan, 2004). It has dramatically altered family life in most western societies and has increased overtime since 1960 as an "alternative lifestyle" to the traditional nuclear family and it is a living arrangement before marriage. In the developed countries of the west, its prevalence as a legitimate, nonnative lifestyle continues to rise, particularly among young people and students (Bumpass & Lu 2000; Smock, 2000). Co-habitation, also known as trial marriage, has now become a common phenomenon in the modern time.

The increase in co-habitation is one of the most significant shifts in family demography of the past century (Alo, 2008). It has become common among students in Nigerian Higher Institutions. Yet, co-habitation prior to marriage has been consistently associated with poorer marital communications quality, lower marital satisfaction and higher level of domestic violence (Clarkberg, Stolzenberg, and Waite, 1995). Co-habitation is associated with negative marital outcomes and high rates of divorce in many developed countries (Klusener, Perelli-Harris, Gussen, 2012). Co-habitation is also associated with lower marital satisfaction, poorer perceived and observed communication in marriage (Cohan and Kleinbaum, 2002). Co-habitation was obscure and even taboo throughout the nineteenth century and until 1970s (Ogadinma, 2013). Non marital unions have become common because the meaning of the family has been altered by individualistic social values that have progressively matured since the late 1940s (Ogunsola, 2004). Although in the past, co-habitation was not viewed as the right thing to do, it is now sometimes seen as a "necessity." Some people do it out of preparation for marriage, while others do it for convenience. Fortie and Tanfer (1996) asserted that sex is paramount in co-habiting relationship, and it is associated with teenage and unintended pregnancies, abortion, as well as the spread of STIs and HIV.

According to Oguniola (2004), it is a situation where unmarried people live together like husband and wife to test their compatibility before the actual marriage. Ofoegbu (2002), also described the practice as a situation where a man and woman without being customarily or officially married, live together and share all or some of the benefits of marital relationship. Co-habitation is thereby conceptualised as sharing in the legal and social rights of consortium which is customarily meant for the married people. This is consistent with Cheeseman (2002) that refers to co-habitation as a practice in which a man and woman dwell together in the same place in the manner as husband and wife before the actual marriage. In the United States, some researchers found that couples see co-habitation as a "trial run" for marriage and one survey indicated that 61% of young adults believe that co-habitation improves one's chances in marriage John and Sharon (2006).

Whitehead and Popenoe (2002) asserted that living together before marriage is one of Americans' most significant and unexpected family trends. They defined co-habitation as living together as sexual partners, not married to each other, and sharing a household. They further concluded that the number of unmarried couples in America topped 4 million, by 1997 up from less than half a million in 1960. It was estimated that about a quarter of unmarried women between the ages of 25-39 years are currently living with a partner and about half have lived sometime with an unmarried partner. It is believed that co-habitation is a good way to get to know your partner before marriage and will lead to a stronger marriage. However, research has not supported this commonly held view. Kramer (2004) found that couples who cohabited before engagement or marriage reported more negative interactions, lower confidence in the relationship, poorer relationship quality, and lower dedication to the relationship than those who cohabited after engagement or those who did not cohabit before marriage at all.

Co-habitation has been reported as a common phenomenon among students in Nigerian higher institutions and a predisposing factor to the initiation of sexual activities (Alo, 2008). Co-habitation is increasingly becoming the first co-residential union formed among young adults who may have several cogent or flimsy reasons such as to save money, to 'test' relationship compatibility, convenience of living, or need to find housing (Ohlsson, 2011). Most of the students who cohabit in this way leave school with poor grades, if they ever graduate because majority are withdrawn from the academic system.

while some spend longer time than necessary as a result of failure, and those who come out with good grades are extremely good. More likely dangers associated with co-habitation are the female students being beaten up by their partners or boyfriends or 'would-be husbands', and this in no doubt would affect the academic performance of the students (Ogadinma, 2013).

There are strong indications that co-habitation is now perceived as a normative part of life course by majority of young adults. In the 2002 National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG), two-thirds of both male and female 18-29 years old who have never been married disagree with the statement that "a young people should not live together unless they are married" (National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, 2005).

1.2 Statement of the problem

Young people aged 10-24 years constitute around 1.8 billion and represent 27% of the world's population Shiferaw and Tsehiwot (2009). Studies noted that as they are in the youth age category, their modest or dynamic behaviour make them vulnerable to risky sexual behaviours Sime and Writu (2008). Sexually transmitted diseases like HIV/AIDS and other reproductive health problems are the greatest threat to the well-being of adolescents and youth (Oerhane and Fantahun, 2005). Globally, one third of the 340million new STIs cases occur per year in people under 25 years of age. Each year, more than one in every adolescents contracts a curable STI. Studies reported that more than half of all new HIV infections occur in people between the ages of 15 and 24 years (Fikre and Belre, 2009). According to the Joint United Nation Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), in 2008 young people aged 15-24 years accounted for 42% of new HIV infections.

Despite high level of awareness of HIV/AIDS in Nigeria as reported by Omoregie (2002), Adedimeji (2003), the risky sexual acts are still common occurrences among students. Magnus and Gbakeji (2007) affirmed that sex is a phenomenon currently ravaging higher institution in Nigeria as a lot of students are engaged in premarital and cohabitating relationships on campus. Studies also reported that youths are known to be adventurous and to engage in intense sexual activities (Moore and Rosenthal, 1993, Varga and Makubalo, 1996; Lear, 1995, 1997). Observations by Gesto (2004), revealed that students in tertiary institutions regard their freedom as what they must explore and enjoy to the

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fullest, including sexual relationships and living couple's life, that is, a male and a female living together as married couples for the duration of their courses.

These risky behaviour may furthered be worsened by the fact that students are too many in number than the available social infrastructures in the Tertiary institutions, lack of sexual and reproductive health services, living away their parents and being free from parental control. In addition some are subjected to peer pressure that aggravate the risky behaviour (Mitike, Lemma, and Berhane, 2002)

Students of higher learning institutions are assets of the society and change agents in filling the gap in the past and on whom the future generation is based (Gurmessa, Fessahaye and Sisay, 2012). It is also clear that this group is on the way of transforming to adulthood; filled with ambition; and building their future academic and social career. Neglecting their sexual and reproductive health can lead to high social and economic costs, both immediately and in the years ahead. Little has been explored about the practices of cohabitation in the context of higher education institutions in Nigeria and in The Polytechnic, Ibadan in particular. Therefore, this study aim to address the practice of co-habitation, challenges faced by those practicing it and identifying the predisposing factors for possible interventions.

1.3 Justification

The issue of unprotected sex, unwanted pregnancy, unsafe abortion and the likely consequent post-abortion complications amongst students of institutions of higher learning have apparently become rampant. It however appears to be under-researched and less reported as issues relating to how students live, including sexual relations, are seldom examined, even as the students and other young people are known to be a most sexually active population (Sal, 1995; Onifade, 1999; Moore and Rosenthal, 1993; Lear, 1995, Varaga and Makubalo, 1996). Therefore, the need has arisen more than ever before, for research works to be carried out to inquire and possibly establish the factors that predispose and encourage young adults to indulge in the practice co-habitation

This study will assist in providing information useful in reducing the practice of cohabitation mainly at The Polytechnic, Ibadan. The study has provided evidence that could assist students practicing co-habitation to be able to disclose information about their

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experiences. The finding from this study is significant for several groups; including health promoters, counselors and psychologists. This study will also contribute to the growing literature on co-habitation since there is a dearth of studies examining co-habitation among students of higher institutions in Nigeria.

This study will add value to the field of health promotion and education on co-habitation in relation to reproductive health. It will also serve as a point of reference for future researchers who wish to conduct further research work in these fields. This study explored co-habitation among polytechnic students in order to bring to the fore the various reasons of involving in the practice.

The wide dearth of knowledge as a result of little work done on this phenomenon is filling a gap bridged and members of the public were to be informed on the consequences that are inherent in such practice. It also revealed some of the negative dangers associated with co-habitation and aid the polytechnic community as well as policy makers to understand the phenomenon and for adequate measures to be taken to bring the issue under control.

1.4 Research questions

1. What are the perceptions of students towards co-habitation?
2. What are the attitudes of students towards co-habitation?
3. What is the prevalence of co-habitation practice at the Polytechnic, Ibadan?
4. What are the perceived factors influencing co-habitation?
5. What are the perceived effects of co-habitation?

1.5 Broad objective

The broad objective of this study was to investigate the perception, practice and attitude of students towards co-habitation at The Polytechnic, Ibadan

1.5.1 Specific objectives

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To assess the perception of students towards co-habitation.
2. To determine the attitude of students towards co-habitation.

3. To determine the prevalence of co-habitation practice among the students of the Polytechnic, Ibadan.
4. To identify the perceived factors that promote co-habitation.
5. To determine the perceived effects of co-habitation on students.

1.6 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested by this study:

1. There is no significant association between the age of respondents and practice of co-habitation.
2. There is no significant association between the sex of respondents and perception towards co-habitation.
3. There is no significant association between the age of respondents and attitude towards co-habitation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Co-habitation

In contemporary society, an increasing number of young people are postponing marriage and opting to live together without formalising their marriage. Despite widely spread, co-habitation lacks a clearly defined and commonly understood position in the family system (Cherlin 2010; Manning and Smock 2005). Co-habitation can be a stage in the marriage process for some couples, a temporary alternative to marriage, or an alternative to being single for others (Smock 2000). In doing so, co-habitation temporarily assumes traditional functions of marriage.

Co-habitation can be defined as an ultimate sexual union between two unmarried partners who share the same living quarters for a sustained period of time (Thornton, Axinn, and Teachman, 1995). The duration of the 'sustained period of time' in which the couple share their living quarter and when this times starts and ends are important elements to define the kind of co-habitation at stake. The literature establishes meaningful distinctions between long term and short term co-habitation, (Manning 1996) as well as premarital and post marital co-habitations Huskins, Coontz, Fama (2012).

John and Sharon. (2006) while citing Brown and Booth, (1996) said two theories may explain why co-habitation leads to higher likelihood of negative outcomes. The first of these, the selection theory, which suggests that co-habitation tends to be chosen by persons who are predispose to be less committed to marriage. According to Thomson and Collella, (1992) selection perspective assumes that people who cohabit before marriage differs in certain ways from non-co-habitors and that these differences increase the likelihood of poor marital quality and divorce. Brown and Booth, (1996) also found out that co-habitation prior to marriage was associated with less marital interaction, more marital disagreement and greater divorce proneness.

The second theory according to John and Sharon (2006) suggest that the experience of co-habitation itself contributes to the latter marital instability. Axinn and Thornton, (1996)

found out that the experience of co-habitation may soften attitude towards divorce, even while their commitment to marriage stays constant. As for Brown and Booth, (1996) this liberalized view of divorce may make co-habitors who eventually marry more prone to divorce because they are less tolerant of relationship changes than those who have never cohabited. One common factor to both theories is the effect of time on both marital and premarital relationships. In regards to selection theory, Thomson and Collella noted that the longer the co-habitation before marriage, the lower the levels of marital quality and commitment. Likewise, Stafford, Kline and Rankin, (2004) found out that the time had significant negative effects for married individuals, co-habitors and co-habitors who eventually married.

The phenomena of premarital sex, co-habitation and companionship have become a practice and acceptable behaviour among students in tertiary institution. Modernisation, economic and social transformation causes many young students not to accept or conform to the same ideology as in previous generations. Students are adapting their behaviour to modern sexual practices instead of following the traditional norms that society wants them to follow. College has long served as a meeting place in the mate selection process for a significant number of young people, and increasingly however, courtship in college involves a new element: living together before marriage.

The growing numbers of those who cohabit and engage in premarital sex are made manifest in the area of high rate premarital pregnancy and the spread of HIV and AIDs pandemic among the youth in greater proportions (Mwaba and Naidoo, 2005). This living arrangement has become especially prevalent among young people marking the formation of a union (Dumpass and Lu 2000, Kieman 2004, Ermisch 2005). Co-habitation is associated with increased risk of adverse effects, such as dissatisfaction and negative interaction in relationship, violence, drug and alcohol use and alcohol consumption-related death (Jousennleml, Moustgaard, Koskinen, Rippaul, Martikainen, 2007).

2.1.2 Perception towards co-habitation

There is a concern that co-habitation is replacing marriage with a less stable arrangement and fostering attitudes that are detrimental to known marital quintessence of endurance, focus, and stability (Rosalind, 2006). Descriptively, a rise in the number of people that are

practicing co-habitation will suggest a simultaneous increase in the rate at which marriage is being postponed.

Co-habitation is an alternative union between individuals that expresses the reality that marriage is not the defining characteristics of their family lives. This means marriage is not immediately desirable, practical or possible. Co-habitation requires comparatively less economic and social commitment, and it is generally more flexible and egalitarian than marriage (Seltzer, 2004).

Some young people see it as an essential transitioning stage between single and married life rather than a direct replacement to marriage. And also see cohabitation as a trial marriage that is meant to assess the viability of their partnership in the long term. In this sense, co-habitation is a precautionary option because of its potential to weed out bad matches before marriage, with a view to securing a lesser chance of divorce (Kieman and Estagah, 1993).

Rindfuss and Audrey (1990) argue that co-habitation is just an alternative to being single. From this point of view, co-habitation is similar to marriage in some ways, and that it is also appropriate to compare it to single life. Although co-habitors obviously embrace some of the characteristics of marriage; such as shared household and sexual intimacy, in terms of fertility, non-familial activities, and home ownership, their behavior have more in common with single people than the married. Therefore, co-habitation is not necessarily a premarital phase or an alternative to marriage, but can be an intensification of the dating experience.

Generally, the reasons people gave for co-habitation were different and reflected a strong desire to be together, but specifically, it is a life-stage decision (Tennant, Taylor, and Lewis 2006). Doigin (2011) in his study stated that co-habitation weed out incompatible couples and prepare people for a better marriage; yet evidence disapproves this theory. Furthermore, Rhoades, Stanley & Markman (2009) studied the reason given for moving in together and found three distinct motives including more time together or greater intimacy, convenience and a desire to test one's relationship.

Again Bumpass, Sweet and Cherlin (1991) found out in their study that 51% and 56% of young men and women endorse co-habitation as important to be sure they are compatible

before marriage. Manning and Cohen (2012) in his study found 60% of young adults 18-28 agreed that living together prior to marriage help prevent divorce. Thorton and Young-Demarco (2001) found out that a substantial majority of adults believes that living together before marrying is a good idea and few believe it is wrong or harmful.

2.1.3 Prevalence of Co-habitation

The arrangement of co-habitation tends to be short-lived, resulting either in marriage or break-up within two or three years (Bumpass & Lu, 2000). As of 2002 over 50% of women ages 19-44 had cohabited in United states for a portion of their lives, compared to 33% in 1987 and virtually none a hundred years ago (Kennedy & Bumpass, 2008). And as co-habitation rates have skyrocketed, marriage rates have plummeted. The yearly number of marriage per 1000 unmarried women age 15 and older has dropped by nearly half since 1970, from 76% to 41% in 2005 (Popenoe & Whitehead, 2007). A major reason for the decline of marriage rates is precisely the rise of co-habitation. Without the possibility of co-habitation, a much higher percentage of the population would be married; there has been little decrease in recent times in the propensity of young people to desire to become couples. Ogadinma (2013) in his study on co-habitation among University of Ibadan undergraduate students found that 23% of the students among the respondent actually cohabit with the opposite sex.

Dolgin (2011) in his study found out that there were 5.1million co-habiting couples in 2004, representing a 170percent increase from 1980. This trend has continulry with over 7.5million co-habiting couples in 2011 (Jayson, 2011) and of couples who currently cohabit, 20 percent are under 25years old (Dolgin, 2011). In 2006, 4.4% of all households in the United states were comprised of unmarried partners (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006). The percentage represent a dramatic increase from just a generation ago and it is likely an underestimate because the way co-habitation has been defined by the census. According to Bumpass & Lu (2000) study, they found out that 60% to 70% couples now live together before they marry. As co-habitation become more prevalent, marriage has been declining, The 1995 National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) show that the ratio of women who were married by age 25 decreased from almost 70% of the cohort born in 1950-1954 to 53% of cohort born in 1965-1969 (Raley, 2000). Co-habitation preceded almost 60% of all first marriages between 1990 and 1994 compared to 46% between 1980 and 1984 (Bumpass & Lu, 2000).

Brown (2005) found out in his study that 62% of women's first marriages are preceded by co-habitation either with their spouse or with someone else. Again Kline, Scot and Stanley, 2004 found that 61% of young adults reported that they are currently co-habiting. The proportion of women in the early 20s who have ever cohabited increased from less than 30% in the late 1980s to just over 43% in 2002 (Bumpass and Lu 2000, Chandra, Martinez, Mosher and Abma, 2005). Half of co-habiting relationships end in one year or less, either through marriage or relationship breakup.

Co-habitation has increased dramatically in the U.S., rising from 500,000 couples in 1970 to nearly 5million in 2000 (U.S. Bureau of the census 2001). Among persons in their twenties and thirties, more than one-half have experienced co-habitation, suggesting that co-habitation is now a normative stage in the life course (Bumpass and Lu, 2000). Co-habitation most often serves as a prelude to marriage as about 75% of co-habitors report plans to marry their partners and the chief reason why co-habitors report living together is to test the relationship's viability for marriage (Brown and Booth, 1996). Whitehead and Popenoe (2006) also report a decline in marriage rates, an increase in non-marital co-habitation, an increase in the number of births to unmarried women, and an increase in single parent households.

2.1.4 Attitudes toward Co-habitation

Attitudes have consequences on successive behaviour of individuals (Axinn & Thornton, 1996). Marriage have been around the world far as back as history goes. Now we face an era where family life is undergoing major changes. Premarital sex is promoted and nobody frowns at co-habitation by unmarried youth. In a National Longitudinal Survey of Youth conducted in the United States, nearly 66% of high school senior boys and 61% of the girls indicated that they agreed with the statement, 'it is usually a good idea for a couple to live together before getting married' (Bumpass & Lu, 2000).

The growing acceptance of co-habitation by young adults mirrors the rise in co-habitation among U.S couples, as more than half of all marriages are now preceded by co-habitation (Bumpass & Lu, 2000). Popenoe and Whitehead (2007) study found that in the past 25 years the percentage of high school seniors who agree to co-habitation has climbed from 45% to 64% for boys and 32% to 57% for girls. In a National Survey of Young Adults conducted in the United States between the ages of 20 and 29 years

commissioned by the National marriage Project in 2001, 43% agreed that 'you would only marry someone if he or she agreed to live together with you first, so that you could find out whether you really get along (Popenoe and Whitehead, 2002). College students who cohabit generally hold a positive attitude about the situation, reporting personal growth, deeper understanding of one's partner, deeper love, disclosing more and better sex lives (Dolgin, 2011). Smock (2000) found that co-habitation was more prevalent among people who are slightly liberal, less religion and more supportive of egalitarian gender roles and nontraditional family roles.

Individuals who approve co-habitation are more likely to cohabit than those who do not and individual who have positive attitude toward marriage marry more quickly than those who do not (Axinn & Thornton, 1996). Attitudes and values concerning work, family, leisure time, money, sex roles and marriage influence the choice between co-habitation and marriage for young adults (Clackberg et al., 1995). Cherlin (2004) states "the typically short durations of co-habiting unions in the United States, along with expressed preference for marriage, suggest that marriage is still the goal for most young adult and co-habitation is still seen as an intermediate status. Tucker (2000) found strong pro-marriage values in a sample of U.S. adults, particularly among African American and Mexican Americans.

Slightly less than half of co-habitors have definite plans to marry their partner, and about three-fourth of co-habitors have either definite plans or think they will marry their partner (Bumpass, Sweet & Cherlin 1991). Only one quarter of co-habitors do not expect to marry anyone (Manning & Smock 2002). Among co-habitors, about 70% of both blacks and whites report marriage plans of these, 60% of the whites actually married compared to 20% of the blacks (Brown, 2005)

2.1.5 Co-habitation as an alternative to marriage

The increasing popularity of living together prior to getting married has normalized unmarried co-habitation (Amato, Dush, and Cohen, 2003; King & Scott, 2005). Living together without being married is more acceptable today than it was a couple of years ago, Amato et al., 2003). Co-habitation is dynamic and its influences are far reaching for later marriage and children involved, it becomes possible to deduct precautions and predict effects of this new relationship structure. Many researchers (Hohmann-Marriott,

2006; King & Scott, 2005; Manning & Smock, 2005) point out that people cohabit for reasons of financial and sexual convenience, as well as a sign of stronger commitment (a step before marriage and after dating). However, the lack of common language or terminology (such as husband / wife / fiancé) seems to show that co-habitation prior to marrying is not yet institutionalized (Manning & Smock, 2005). Most people believe that their co-habitation will strengthen future marriage but, according to Hohnmann-Marriott (2006), couples who cohabit prior to marriage have higher divorce rates and shorter-lived marriages. The main reasons why co-habitation does not actually strengthen future marriage are attributed to nontraditional views (such as egalitarian views and division of labour), lack of problem solving and communication skills, and poor knowledge of self and partner (Hohnmann-Marriott, 2006). King and Scott (2005) as well as Nock (2005) found that co-habiting couples are less committed to the relationship (compared to married couples) and dissolve their union more readily. Difficult issues are not deemed worth the hard work needed to resolve the problem. Nock asserts that although marriage is still a public affair (you invite friends, family, perhaps even media, and a priest to witness your devotion) it is an "enforceable trust"; co-habitation, on the other hand, is a private commitment, and is thus easier to abandon. Co-habitation is a fluid process (King & Scott, 2005) as the majority of people who live together indicate that they have not made an actual decision to live together, instead that it gradually just happened.

"It began...she stayed at my house more and more from spending the night once to not going home for weeks...there was no official starting date. I did take note when the frilly fufu soups showed up in my bathroom that she'd probably moved in at that point" (Manning & Smock, 2005, p. 995).

This quote from Manning and Smock (2005) indicates that deciding to marry or co-habiting are not the same thing, and it reveals, to some extent, that co-habitation is a less committed and less formal union. By becoming an increasingly acceptable relationship structure, more and more people are accepting co-habitation as an alternative to marriage. This effect on marriage, as well as the weakening esteem of marriage despite the benefits of marriage, speaks of a bleak future for the institution of marriage.

2.1.6 Factors that influence co-habitation

Some of the factors that influence co-habitation are:

Changes in the family

Family change may occur with growing certainty about the future. Young adults may perceive co-habitation as a future union choice in a context of high uncertainty (Stanley, Amato, Johnson and Markman, 2006). Uncertainty can apply to specific relationships, economic prospects, and the importance of marriage. Co-habitation may be a way to move a relationship forward without making a strong interpersonal commitment (Stanley, Whitton and Markman, 2004). Structural changes have led to less clearly delineated movement through the higher education system and less certainty about transition to stable employment with financial security. Co-habitation may be a variable relationship option during times of uncertain economic futures and may allow for flexibility that is not possible in marriage. The current generation of young adults grew up with high divorce rates and may be concerned about replicating this pattern in their own lives (Manning, Longmore, and Giordano, 2007). Co-habitation may be viewed as a way to test relationship in a context of low levels of confidence in marriage as a stable relationship (Smock, Manning and Bergstrom, 2006).

Attitudes towards marriage

Observing young adults' attitudes and their behavioral preferences are good bases for understanding the possibility of their subsequent practice of co-habitation. Union formation expectations may have considerable predictive power. For example, young adults with prior positive attitudes about co-habitation, whether as a pre-requisite to marriage or as a substitute, are associated with co-habitation (Axinn and Barber, 2002, Cunningham and Thornton 2005).

By every indication, the attitude and reasoning approach a millennium, upwardly mobile person would give concerning a matter, such as telecommunication, abortion, gay-marriage, health, or in this case, co-habitation, differ by a considerable margin to the thought system of two or three decades ago. Some people view marriage as a religious necessity, while some others see it as an optional waste of time which imposes certain constraints they would preferably avoid. This is largely a consequence of evolution and

invention of new ways of doing things and the general preference individuals give to convenience over tradition.

Socio-economic status

Parents with more resources have greater expectations that their children will pursue college education and get married and are able to support their children's transition into adulthood such as paying for college education and wedding ceremonies (Smock, Manning, and Porter, 2005). Children whose parents come from a low socio-economic status may be less certain about their economic future and less able to achieve the economic standards necessary for marriage. Thus, there are higher expectations that young adults from more disadvantaged families will likely follow after co-habitation, since it is a path that require less parental expenditure.

Generally speaking, the economy gets to a point where the elements making it up change thereby creating an economic contraction or expansion. Changes in these elements- which were erstwhile stable, and have resulted in stability, and created a secure nuclear family with just enough economic resources- affect co-habitation in an unbelievable way.

Oppenheimer (2003) drawing on data from the National Longitudinal survey of Youth (NSLY), found that men's work experience, earning and whether they are employed full-time have positive effect on marriage. As Oppenheimer concludes, men working less than full-time, year-round may enter a co-habiting relationship than a marital one (Oppenheimer, 2003). Given the correlation between family structures and family income; married couple families, on average, enjoy higher incomes and lower poverty rates than co-habiting couple (Manning and Brown 2006). Qualitative research indicates that insufficient income as being important contributors in delaying marriage and encouraging co-habitation (Smock, Manning and Porter 2005).

Religion

Except one is an atheist, every individual either belongs to, is born into or adopts a religion of some sort which is guided mostly by written rules of conducts and certain principles of worship. Christianity, Judaism, and Islam have stances of opposition to co-habitation (Prager, 2012). These religious groups agree that co-habitation before marriage is a violation of their moral beliefs on the sanctity of a sexual relationship between a man

and a woman outside of marriage. Pre-marital, extra-marital and same-sex relationships are all forbidden in Islam (Halstead, 2012)

This seems ironic as there has been a surprising 1,566% increase in the rate of couples co-habiting in the United States between 1960 and 2011 (Jayson, 2011). With 'birth outside marriage' as an effective indicator of co-habitation, in 2011, it represented a majority in the European countries; in Iceland- 65.0%, Bulgaria- 56.1%, France- 55.8%, Sweden- 54.3%, and Belgium- 50.0% (epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu..., 2013). The Latinos have between 55-74% (the highest rate in the world) of all their childbearing to unmarried parents (sustaindemographicdividend.org, 2013). In Australia, 22% of couples were co-habiting as of 2005, 78% of couples who marry have lived beforehand in 2008 rising from 16% in 1975 (Alan, Ruth, Lixin and Matthew, 2010). It means that most members of these religious groups, as explained above don't adhere to the strict nature of their religious organization's belief on co-habitation. However the pressure from other members of the group or religious authorities lead to a drop in co-habitation as is the case in most Asian countries and in the Middle East.

In addition, adolescents strong religious beliefs are positively associated with their marriage expectations (Crissey 2005). Young adults who are less religious will have more positive co-habitation expectations (Cunningham and Thornton, 2005). Young adults faced with indecision between co-habitation and marriages are more likely to cohabit than many. Research also indicates that young adults who are traditional in their views about marriage and who report greater religiosity have lower co-habitation expectation (Manning, Smock and Majumdar, 2007).

Family background

Young adults may model their parents' family formation behavior. Prior work indicates that children from divorced, stepparent, or single parent families report lower expectations and weaker support from marriage (Crissey, 2005) and express more positive attitude towards co-habitation. Teenagers who experience parental divorce may be especially sensitive to the instability of marriages and may view co-habitation as a way to avoid divorce and to test relationship (Smock et al, 2006). Parents who are more religious have children who express more positive attitudes towards marriage and less supportive views for co-habitation (Cunningham and Thornton, 2005). Thus, parents who

express less traditional attitudes may more often have children who expect to cohabit, whereas parents who express traditional beliefs may have children who expect only to marry and not to cohabit (Wilson and Widom, 2003). Families may also influence cohabitation and marriage by providing or removing emotional and instrumental support for couples. A dating couple may make decisions about the progress of their relationship based on actual or expected responses of their parents. However, there are relatively few empirical studies on the topic. Co-habiting couples do not appear to enjoy the same *safety net* (e.g., social and instrumental support from parents) as married couples (Eggebeen 2005, Hao 1996, Marks and McLanahan 1993). One reason for the discrepancy may be that parents are less approving of the co-habiting relationships and may indirectly influence views of co-habitation by threatening or actually withdrawing support.

Peers

While past research has recognized the importance of peer socialization in forming attitudes about and behaviors toward the opposite sex in adolescence (e.g., Brown 2005, Cavanaugh 2007, Collins 1997, Connolly, O'Reilly and Cardwell 2000, Hartup, French, Laursen, Johnson, and Ogawa 1993), research on the peer influence among young adults is limited. Expected changes in relationships with peers deter men's desire to marry (South 1993), and among some subgroups (young African American males) peer groups may influence decisions regarding relationships (Anderson 1990). As discussed above, perceived approval from social networks (friends and families) is tied to heightened relationship stability and quality (Felmlee 2001, Felmlee, Sprecher and Bassin 1990).

In addition, peer socialization is a component of research focusing on how neighborhoods influence family behavior, often via mechanism such as contagion (peer influence) (Brooks, 2006). The theoretical and substantive findings suggest that peers should have some influence on the nature and course of romantic relationships in early adulthood. Given that co-habitation is an informal living arrangement and does not share the same strong societal supports as marriage dating couples' attitudes towards co-habitation may be especially influenced by their peer networks. For example, empirical evidence on co-habitation suggests that peer do matter in Japan. A positive and direct link between knowing individuals who have cohabited with is respondents' positive attitude towards co-habitation exists in Japan (Rindfuss, Choe, Humpal, and Tsuya, 2004).

- iv. Peer influence: This is because most students who cohabit have friends who are also engaged in co-habitation. As teenagers grew older, the reference group of the greatest importance switches from parents to peers (Macklin, 1988). This is also supported further by Yoon (2004) who asserted that as adolescents grew older into young adulthood, peers become progressively more influential and parents less influential.
- v. Ambition is another reason why some students cohabit. As insignificant as it seems, we have seen many instances where new students in tertiary institutions move in with senior students of the same department. The reason they give for this is that their senior cohabitant would put them through the educational and social challenges they face through their years as fresh students. This mutual arrangement enables them to support each other, grow together, and share in the challenges of study and goal getting.

Muriithi, Ngige, and Mugenda (2006) gave a broad outline of some of the factors influencing co-habitation among college students in ranking order:

1. Desire for intimacy and sex on a regular basis.
2. Being in a strong emotional relationship.
3. Strong physical attraction towards someone.
4. Desire to experiment with new living.
5. Desire to test compatibility for marriage.
6. High cost of living on campus.
7. Sharing economic and domestic responsibilities.
8. Permissive sexual attitudes.
9. Sexual frustration
10. Education demands that do not allow for early marriage.
11. Fear of marital commitment.
12. Desire for personal growth.
13. Loneliness.
14. Peer Influence.
15. Awareness of high divorce rate.

2.1.8 Effects of co-habitation

Despite an increasing acceptance of co-habitation in society as a whole and particularly among sociologists, there is no body of research documenting its benefits. Similarly, there

A more direct way through which peers may influence co-habitation is through perceptions of peer experience in co-habitation such perceptions may become 'vicarious trials' for dating couples that are considering co-habitation (Nazio and Blossfeld, 2003). Nazio and Blossfeld (2003) found that young German men and women rely on the experience of peers (i.e. their same age reference group) more so than they do on their parents' attitude and behaviours.

2.1.7 Causes of co-habitation

Based on the numerous researches conducted on co-habitation, it has been discovered that people's reasons for co-habiting are;

- i. Improvement in the ability to choose a life's partner, one of the most common assumptions sustaining this modern couples to see if they are compatible prior to trying the nuptial chord to reduce the probability of future breakup. In this postulation, family economist believe that reliable information on a partner can only be gained for manifest characteristics such as education and appearance and that lack of such information and the "mismatches" inherent from it are the primary cause of divorce (Bruderl, Dickmann, and Engelhardt, 1999). Co-habitation hence provides the intending couples with the necessary information that should terminate the conjugal relationship between co-habitors before marriage.
- ii. Security reason: Since co-habitation is more prevalent among those who never lived with both parents at a young age, they feel a sense of security which they have never felt when they cohabit (A statistical portrait based on cycle 6 (2002) of the National Survey of Family Growth).
- iii. Inability to afford accommodations or the unavailability of enough housing facilities in school environment. While some tertiary institutions in Nigeria don't have enough resources to finance hostel constructions, efforts made by others have rather worsened the case. Privatization of school hostels provides a relatively better security but at a higher cost. This has forced undergraduate students to look outwards for a cheaper and available alternative, living together with and sharing things in common with fellow students of the opposite sex. Cohabitants could live together in order to save money, or to fulfil a need to find housing (Krauer, 2004).

is little research examining its disadvantages for younger adults. However some of the positive and negative effect of co-habitation will be discussed below.

Positive effects of co-habitation

Co-habitation is indulged in due to its convenience and in terms of sexual availability. More recent trends indicate that perhaps a higher proportion of co-habitors than in the past simply drift into co-habitation because it is more convenient than dating. That is, it makes it easier to be with each other sexually than when living separately. Living together also results when one the other dater is looking for an apartment, co-habiting is then a form of savings; sharing an apartment is less expensive than maintaining two separate ones. Couples who move together for such reasons generally do not think long term and this arrangement is currently pleasant, economically advantageous, and less complicated (Crissey, 2005)

In the aspect of relationship, for many young couples, living together may serve the function of testing to see if they can graduate to a more permanent relationship, whether long term co-habitation or marriage. Couples who have plans to marry before moving in together or who are engaged before co-habiting typically marry before two years of living together (Munow and Lin, 2010). Also, when co-habitors plan to marry, the quality of their relationship is not much different from that of married couples that have been together for the same duration (Brown and Booth, 1996). In addition, because it is less institutionalized, the couples may feel free to invent their relationship outside the mould of traditional expectation and gender roles. There seem to be a more equal division of labour within co-habitation than within marriage (Shelton and John, 1993).

Negative effects of co-habitation

The negative effects of co-habitation are more pronounced than its positive effect and some of these are:

Poor Academic Performance: Persons in co-habiting relationships have higher likelihood of performing poorly academically in comparison to those who are not because such individuals will spend most of their time in professing their love for each other, having sexual intercourse, focusing on irrelevant things and less time on academic work (Joan & Olive, 2011). The effect of co-habitation on academic performance of the students is negative (Ogadiemma, 2013). When quarrel ensues and disagreement takes

longer time, students are affected emotionally and finds it difficult to concentrate in while reading and in class during lectures.

Premarital Sexual Activities: Sex appears to be a key part of the co-habiting "deal." According to the 1992 National Health and Social Life Survey, co-habiting men and women make love on average between seven and seven and a half times a month, or about one extra sex act a month than married people. Co-habitors have intercourse more frequently than married couples (Laumann, Gagnon, Michael and Michaels, 1994). These relationships are more individualistic and may be more invested in sexuality while marriage may be more invested in general commitment (Clark, 1996). However, married couples are usually happier with their relationship than co-habitors (Nock 1998). Forste and Tanfer (1996) conclude that marriage itself increases sexual exclusivity; co-habitation is no better than "dating" on this dimension. Sex is paramount in co-habiting relationships and it is associated with teenage and unintended pregnancies, abortion, the spread of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and HIV (Alo, 2008). The rise in premarital sex in Africa has resulted from a sexual revolution that came with western culture (Scott, 2006). Alo (2008) asserted that sex in southwest Nigeria before now was regarded as sacred and limited only to adult males and females within marriage. The infiltration of this sexual revolution into Nigeria brought about changes in attitude towards premarital sex and leading to the involvement of adolescents and young adults who are yet to marry into it. Since premarital sex is wrong and dangerous to health, its resulting effect is abortions, teenage mothers and sexually transmitted infections (Aron 2006, Finer, 2007). Co-habitation has been reported as a common phenomenon among Nigerian University undergraduates (Alo 2008). Since co-habitation affects the females more than the males, once a young girl becomes pregnant and decides to abort it, the consequence might be death if not careful but if such person decides not to abort the unborn baby, the end result is teen childbearing and this might lead to her dropping out of school but except in rare cases, she may never go back to school (Alo 2008). In addition, both parties involved in co-habitation are in risk of infections such as STDs/HIV.

Gender Equality: Although, the gender division of labour prevails within co-habitation, co-habiting students may choose to organize this more equitably than is characteristic of marriage. Ogburn (2013) in her research quoted a co-habiting student saying: "we contribute our money and time to run the home. I can wash plates and clean the house

while my girlfriend is cooking. Sometimes I even do the cooking too." Because co-habitation is often perceived as a trial marriage, women may select men who are willing to share domestic work (Seltzer, 2000).

Teen Childbearing: The rise in co-habitation in modern times has seriously weakened the institution of marriage and strongly contributed, to a large extent, to the increase in unwed births and lone-parent families. This suggests that children being reared in single families that do not involve the two biological parents lack adequate development that such children should benefit from the economic and emotional investments of their natural parents that are living together in conjugal harmony. This poses a serious problem to the future of such children as empirical evidence has consistently shown that individuals fare best both in childhood and in later life when they are brought up in a healthy home where both parents are involved in their upbringing (Ogunsola 2004).

The issue of commitment, infidelity and physical abuse: The researchers from Denver suggests that relationships with pre-engagement co-habitation may wind up sliding into marriage, whereas those that only cohabit post-engagement or marriage make more clear decisions. This could explain their 2006 study of 197 heterosexual couples finding that men who cohabited with their spouse before engagement were less dedicated than men who cohabited only after engagement or not at all before marriage (Rhoades, Stanley and Markman, 2009). Co-habitors are less faithful to their partners sexually (Glumstein and Schwartz 1990). Forste and Tanfer 1996 report that co-habiting women were five times more likely than married women to have another sexual encounter since the beginning of their relationship which means co-habitation itself makes people less committed. It was demonstrated through a survey that 20% of co-habiting women reported having secondary sex partners compared to only 4% of married women. Likewise, Linda Waite, a sociologist found that 16% of co-habiting women reported that arguments with their partners became physical during the past year, while only 5% of married women had similar experiences (Harris, 2000). Margolin (1992) found that male members of cohabitants with children are less likely to be a part of the childcare but half of the time they are responsible for child abuse.

Community Disregard: Friends, family, and the community view cohabitants with a particular view which is almost the same as though they were still singles. Even if a non-

married couple has been living together for several years, their partner is generally relegated to the status of boyfriend or girlfriend in the eyes of friends and family members. Generally, family members offer less support to co-habiting members and are less likely to consider the partner as part of the family or consider them in long-term family planning.

Marital instability, disruption and divorce in adulthood: since co-habitation performs the function of trial marriage, we would intuitively expect marriages preceded by co-habitation to fare better than the ones not preceded by co-habitation. However, studies have shown that co-habitation negatively influences the quality and longevity of marriages (Axinn and Thornton 1996, Balakrishnan 1987). The Centre for Disease Control, in 2002 found that for married couples, the percentage of the relationship ending after 5 years is 20%, for unmarried cohabitants the percentage is 49%. After 10 years, the percentage for the relationship to end is 33% for married couples and 62% for unmarried cohabitants. According to an article in *Population Trends* the results are clear cut: 'For every duration of marriage, the cumulative proportions of marriages which had broken down are higher amongst marriages in which there was co-habitation than amongst marriages in which there was no co-habitation.'

Neurotic Disorder: A large national survey of mental illness was commissioned by the Department of Health. The aim was to provide information about the prevalence of psychiatric problems among adults, aged between 16 and 64 in Great Britain. The data suggested that the mental well-being of women is adversely affected by a co-habiting arrangement, whereas the mental well-being of men is hardly affected at all. Many women feel unhappy about a sexual relationship that lacks permanence. It seems likely that women are worried by the possibility that they may become pregnant, and then face the consequences with a man who is not their husband and has made no life-long commitment to the relationship.

Abortion: rates of unintended pregnancy and abortion are high among co-habiting women, particularly among those that are younger, have less than a college degree, and are in lower quality relationships (Bouchard, Lachance, Grzela, and Goguen 2005). Estimates for 2001 suggest that 70% of co-habiting women's pregnancies were unintended and that over half these 54% ended in abortion (Finer & Henshaw, 2006). Co-

habiting women under the age of 30 years have higher contraceptives failure rates than do married and single women, regardless of the type of contraception used (Fu, Darroch & Ranjitt, 1999). Research based on the 1995 National Survey of Family growth found that nearly two-thirds of the women who became pregnant while co-habiting during the early 1990s were not married at the birth of the child (Raley, 2001). The World Health Organisation (2004) has defined unsafe abortion as "the termination of an unintended pregnancy either by persons lacking the necessary skills or in an environment lacking the minimal medical standards or both". Indeed, the WHO (1998) states that induced and unsafe abortion is a critical public health problem and an important cause of maternal mortality in developing countries.

Intimate partner violence: Intimate partner violence is more common and more severe in co-habiting couples than in both dating and married couples (e.g., Brownridge & Halli, 2000; Kline et al., 2004 Stets & Straus, 1989). As compared with married women, co-habiting women were approximately three times more likely to report being the victim of domestic violence and twice as likely to report being the perpetrator of that violence (Kessler, Molnar, Feurer, & Appelbaum, 2001). After controlling for age, education, and occupation, co-habiting couples still had the highest assault rate, followed by dating and then married couples (Stets & Straus, 1989). However, when differences in demographic and social factors (social support and social control) were accounted for, co-habiting and married couples reported similar rates of aggression (Stets, 1991). This result suggests that co-habiting couples' higher rates of aggression may be partially spurious and/or indirect (Stets, 1991). Moreover, most (Brown, 2005; Brown, Lee and Bulanda, 2005; Marcussen, 2005; Stafford, Kline and Rankin, 2004), but not all (Horwitz & White, 1998), studies have suggested that co-habiting individuals have more depressive symptoms than do married individuals. Brown et al. (2005) showed that co-habiting individuals had more depressive symptoms than married individuals after controlling for economic resources, social support, and physical health. Additionally, Marcussen (2005) showed that remaining differences in depression between co-habiting and married individuals could be explained by differences in coping resources and relationship quality. In addition to depressive symptoms, co-habiting individuals, especially men, experience more problems with alcohol than do married and single individuals (Horwitz & White, 1998; Marcussen, 2005). These differences in alcohol problems persisted even after controlling for prior levels of alcohol problems, unconventionality, relationship

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characteristics, and demographic characteristics (Horwitz & White, 1998) and for socioeconomic factors, social resources, relationship commitment, and relationship stability (Marcussen, 2005).

Marital status was the strongest predictor of abuse—ahead of race, age, education or housing conditions—to emerge from data examined by an agency of the US Department of Health and Human Services in 1994. Stets (1991) study revealed how unmarried women were three to four times more likely to be physically abused by their boyfriends while pregnant than married women by their husbands. Confirming earlier findings, the US National Family Violence Resurvey showed that almost 35 out of every 100 co-habiting couples experienced a physical assault during the previous year, compared to 15 per 100 married couples and 20 per 100 dating couples. Moreover, co-habiting couples had the highest rates for each of the three specific types of violence, involving women only, men only and both partners. For example, in 18 out of every 100 co-habiting couples, both were violent, double the rate for dating and married couples. For minor violence committed by both partners, co-habiting couples had roughly double the rate of other groups, and six times the rate of severe violence committed by both partners.

2.2 Theoretical review

2.2.1 Sexual behaviour

According to Alo and Akinde (2010), children learn about sex not from parents but through the mass media and peers. They learn the important topic of sex education in negative manners. Alo (2008) reported that premarital cohabitation is a common phenomenon among Nigeria university undergraduates. Premarital sexual activity is not a recent phenomenon, reports indicate that premarital sex is on the increase in Africa (Zulkiffi and Low, 2007; Alo and Akin, 2010). Filmer (2007), reported that premarital sex is not a surprising occurrence in an era when men and women typically marry in their late twenties. In India, Krishmen (2006) reported an increase in premarital sex among youths. Allen (2003) indicated peer pressure as a significant sexual activity predictor. Other factors associated with premarital sex include, possession of future planners, literacy, urban residents, religion, the breakdown of traditional family system, influence of the mass media, curiosity, expectation of gift and money, living arrangement and economic situations (Kuragu and Zabin, 1995; ; Akinlede and Onifade, 1996; Zanel, 1998; Blank

and Way, 1998; Djamba, 2003; Ghuman, Huy and Knode, 2006; Lee, Chen, Lee and Kaur, 2006; Ramesh and Tgoisne, 2009).

Undergraduate sexual behaviour has attracted global attention, in that its consequences which include unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions, early childbearing and sexually transmitted diseases have become a major public health concern (Omotoso, 2006). Owuamanam (1982), Action Health Incorporated (1996) and Amazigo (1997) reported that early age at sex initiation, high level of premarital sexual activities, risky sexual practices with little or no knowledge about sexual and reproductive health issues is prevalent among the youths. The resultant effects of these practices are high rates of unwanted pregnancies, maternal mortality, sexually transmitted diseases and increasing number of school dropouts. Alike and Egbochuku (2009) found that most adolescent girls dropout of school as a result of pregnancy and early marriage, this could be attributed to inadequate awareness as regards the consequences of their sexual behaviour.

Sexual behaviour is considerably influenced in Nigeria by culture like in many other countries of the world. This perhaps explains why few decades ago, virginity of a girl until she got married was rewarded and various taboos were created round pre-marital sex (Omotoso, 2006). The trend is gradually changing and the incidence of adolescents and youths engaging in sexual intercourse is high and may constitute a problem (Isiugo-Abanihe, Uche and Oyediran, 2004). Some effects of this type of behaviour include sexually transmitted infections (STI's), HIV, gynaecological problems, unwanted pregnancy and increase in the number of abandoned babies. This behaviour opined Isiugo-Abanihe et al., (2004) is prevalent among students in higher institutions of learning in Nigeria and may be due to erosion of various custom and observances as well as factors associated with rapid urbanization. Franzkowiak (1990) identified sexuality as adolescent developmental task. Several studies conducted on sexuality among adolescents show that adults in Nigeria become sexually active at a very early age and this mostly result into negative health outcome such as HIV and other STIs, adolescent pregnancy, premature marriage and other consequences associated with these problems (Isiugo-Abanihe et al., 2004, Temlun and Lauriat, 1999).

According to the 2003 Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS), 75.5% of women between the ages of 25-49 had sexual intercourse by the age of 20, and 39.1% of

men aged 25-59 had sexual intercourse by the age of 20. Similarly, a study conducted by NDHS in 1999 showed that 31.5% of spinsters between the ages of 15-24 years were sexually experienced and the median age of sexual initiation was 16.6 years (Isiugo-Abanihe et al., 2004). Youths are the most vulnerable since they are the most sexually active population and have shown to have engaged in premarital sex (Okpani and Okpani, 2000, Ibe and Ibe, 2003, Juarez and Martin, 2006).

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are a stern health challenge with a worldwide prevalence of 333 million new cases each year (Wolfers, deZwart & Kok, 2011). In developing and developed countries, young adults are at huge risks of contracting sexually transmitted infections mainly through sexual intercourse as a result of their physical, psychosomatic, social and economic characteristics of young adults (Earl, 1995) and they are also vulnerable due to the high levels of risky sexual behaviours and the attitudes, expectations and restrictions of the cultures in which they grow up. Most of the STIs that are prevalent in Nigeria are both ulcerative and non-ulcerative in nature hence; they constitute one of the public health problems. The situation becomes worrisome in the country because STIs are poorly recognised and inadequately treated (Lawoyin, Larsen, Osinowo & Walker, 2001).

The highest rates of STIs are found among young adults within the ages of 20 and 24, followed by adolescents aged 15-19 years (Wolfers, Zwart & Kok, 2011) and adults in this age categories comprise about 20% of the world's population and they also account for 60% of the new HIV infections each year (UNAIDS, 2010). In addition to being a grave infection in all its ramifications, STIs can increase the risk of HIV acquisition and transmission by a factor of up to 10 times. Current statistics on HIV/AIDS in Nigeria provide evidence that young people within the age bracket of undergraduates are the high risk group (UNAIDS, 2000). The reasons that have been adduced to number of factors which include lack of communication between parents and child about sexuality; high level of illicit sexual practices; high incidence of campus prostitution, campus coupling, poverty or harsh economic conditions among other factors (Obinna, 2005, Uzokwe, 2008). With the conception of high prevalence of rate of HIV/AIDS among students of tertiary institutions in Nigeria, one is left wondering if the students are aware of the disease and if various campaigns on HIV/AIDS have any impact on them. Nigeria tertiary institutions present a situation whereby everybody is aware of the deadly virus

HIV/AIDS (Omorie, 2002; Adedimeji, 2003) but they all seem not to care. Students give in easily to peer pressure and physical attractiveness to affect their sexual behaviour. The traditions in most cultures in Nigeria expect youths to remain a virgin before marital unions. However, such norms have been compromised in almost all ethnic groups in the country due to the increase in the age at marriage (Caldwell, Caldwell, Ankrab, Anarfi, Agyeman, Awusabo-Asare & Orubuloye, 1992). The 2008 Nigeria Demographic Health Survey (NDHS) revealed that only 12% of women between the ages of 15-19 had been married at the age of 15 while 39% of women between the ages of 20-24 exchange marital vows at the age of 18. The risky sexual behaviour of young adults has become a serious cause for health promoters and STIs campaign managers because of the serious consequences usually linked with young adults' unprotected sexual exploitation (Moronkola & Idris, 2000).

2.3 Empirical Review

2.3.1 The Relationship between Co-habitation, Mental and Physical Health

Married couples enjoy better mental and physical health than the unmarried (Wu & Hart, 2002). Co-habiting women have rates of depression three times higher than married women do; and co-habiting women are more irritable, anxious, worried and unhappy compared to their married counterparts (Brown, 2000). Co-habiting couples as a whole (men included) report lower levels of happiness, lower levels of sexual exclusivity and sexual satisfaction, and poorer relationships with their parents when compared to marrieds (Nock, 2005). The greater depression characterizing cohabitators is primarily due to their higher relationship instability relative to marrieds; cohabitators' reports of relationship instability are about 25% higher than marrieds' reports (Brown, 2000).

High levels of relationship instability are especially detrimental for cohabitators who have been in their union for a long period of time. Compared to co-habiting men, married men report less depression, less anxiety, and lower levels of other types of psychological distress than those who are single, divorced or widowed (Mirowsky & Ross, 2001). When comparing co-habiting couples to singles, Kurdek (1991) report cohabitators have lower levels of depression and higher levels of happiness than singles, but their mental and physical well-being is still inferior to that of marrieds (Brown, 2000). Cohabitators without

plans to many were found to be more inclined to argue, hit shout, and have an unfair division of labor than married couples (Brown & Booth, 1996). Women in co-habiting relationships are more likely than married women to suffer physical and sexual abuse; and, compared with unmarried cohabitators, married couples engage in a substantially lower rate of physical aggression (Stets, 1991). These findings suggest the possibility that violent cohabitators are less likely to marry than their nonviolent counterparts. If this is the case, co-habitation does serve to improve marital stability by filtering out some of the worst marriage risks, violent couples (Demaris, 2007). Demaris also found somewhat surprising results concerning violence in co-habiting couple; he found that it was women's violence, and not men's, that retards the rate of entry into marriage.

Couples who cohabit have quite different and significantly weaker relationships than married couples (Schoen & Weinick, 1993). Unmarried people in general are not as happy as those who are married; they tend to get sick more often and die younger (Waite, 1995). The unmarried are far more likely to die from all causes, including coronary heart disease, stroke, pneumonia, many kinds of cancer, cirrhosis of the liver, automobile accidents, murder and suicide (Waite & Gallagher, 2000). Both men and women live longer, happier, healthier, and wealthier lives when they are married (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1998). Overall, marrieds are in better psychological and physical health than their non-married counterparts (Brown 2000).

2.3.2 The Relationship between Co-habitation, Parenting and Children

The number of children born to unmarried parent has increased to almost 1/3 of all births in the United States (Selzer, 2000). Of the four million co-habiting couple in the U.S. today, about 40% have resident children (Brown, 2000). Selzer found that there has been a 25% increase in the number of children since the early 1980s. Over years, majority of unmarried mothers are co-habiting at the time of their children's birth (Bumpass et al 1991). One of the greatest problems of children living with a co-habiting couple is the high risk that the couple will break up (Wu, 1995).

Children born into a co-habiting union are already at a disadvantage in terms of parental income and education and are most likely to experience the family form of co-habitation themselves (Smock, 2000). The poorer relationship quality reported by cohabitators has significant consequences for children's well-being. Poor parental relationship quality is

associated with dating difficulties, lower marital quality; greater odds of dissolution, lower level of education attainment, and greater psychological distress among offspring (Brown, 2000). Given the high rates of divorce, co-habitation and non-marital fertility, a substantial proportion of children are at risk of experiencing these adverse outcomes. Previous research has demonstrated effects of parental behavior, attitudes, and values on children's decisions concerning premarital sex and union formation (Axinn & Thornton, 1996). Children of parents who experienced a divorce are more likely to experience non-marital co-habitation than children of stable married parents (Thornton et al. 1995).

Thornton and Young-Demarco (2001) also concluded that parents who divorce may have more favorable attitudes toward divorce or less favorable attitudes toward marriage both of which may be transmitted to their children and may lead to higher rates of both co-habitation and divorce. Parents' attitude toward marriage and divorce may be involved in the process of selecting their children into co-habiting union; those who experience disruption in parental marriages, especially women, are more likely to cohabit (Axinn & Thornton, 1996). Larson and Holman (1994) found that people who spend part of their childhood in single parent or co-habiting families are more likely to have their own union break up. The higher the quality or cohesion in the parent's relationship, the higher the quality of their children's relationship.

Acceptance of co-habitation was higher among adolescents when they were exposed to significant levels of parental conflict and divorce (Heights, Martin, Martin, & Martin 2001). As non-married parents or previously married parents begin to engage in sexual activity outside the boundaries of marriage, and perhaps initiate a non-marital relationship, the acceptability of the nontraditional behaviors is communicated to their children (Axinn & Barber, 2002). If one includes co-habitation in the definition of stepfamily, then almost one half of all stepfamilies are cases of a biological parent and co-habiting partner (Bumpass et al., 1991). Cohabitators' depression scores are increased by the presence of biological and stepchildren, whereas marrieds' depression scores are impervious to children (Brown, 2000). Bumpass et al. (1993) found that half of all currently married stepfamilies with children began with co-habitation, and two-thirds of children entering stepfamilies do so in the setting of co-habitation rather than marriage.

(Seltzer, 2000). Wu and Balakrishnan (1995) suggest that those who are comfortable with having children outside of marriage represent those who are more ideologically committed to long-term co-habitation as an alternative to marriage.

Studies have found that children might actually be a positive influence on co-habitation as they lower the risk of separation in co-habiting unions, yet they also retard the transition to marriage (DeMaris, 2007). Seltzer (2000) has comparative research on co-habiting and children; he states that childbearing apparently promotes union stability; partners were less likely to marry but they were also less likely to separate. The differences between cohabitor and marrieds with children are considerable; the economic status of co-habiting households with children resembles that of single-mother households (Manning & Lichter, 1996). Co-habiting partners also receive less social recognition as a parent (Seltzer, 2000). Research has shown that, when compared to a co-habiting union, stable, single motherhood may provide advantages to raising children (Thomson, Mosley, Hanson, & McLanahan, 2001).

2.4 Conceptual framework

The health providers and promoters need to understand that different people in the communities not only behave differently, but also have different reasons and explanations for behaving the way they do. Hence, the need to direct a health education programmes or intervention based on the diagnosis about health behaviours in each community. Therefore PRECEDE model is used in this study to explain human behaviours as related to perception and attitude towards co-habitation among students of the Polytechnic, Ibadan, Oyo state.

PRECEDE Model

The model provides a comprehensive structure for assessing health and quality-of-life needs of the populace and for designing, implementing, and evaluating health promotion and other public health programmes to meet these needs. It was developed by Green, Kreuter and associates in 1974s and modified in 1999. The model consists of three antecedent factors which are; predisposing, reinforcing and enabling factors that influence human behaviour positively or negatively.

Predisposing Factors

The characteristics of individual such as age, gender, education level, knowledge, attitude and behavior towards co-habitation come to play at this level.

Enabling Factor

These are factors that enable people to act on their predisposition. They include high cost of living in campus, parent socioeconomic status to afford accommodation for their wards in campus is also a factor, education demands (time) that do not allow for early marriage and distance away from home might make students to do whatever they like since they are far away from their parents.

Reinforcing Factors

This factor encourages repetition and persistence of behaviour after a behaviour has been initiated. The reinforcing factors include influence of significant others such as friends, peer groups, acquaintances and contacts in schools. Friends and peer pressure are relevant factors that can also influence the opinion and belief of the students about the subject matter. Peer group and acquaintances can advise the students to get involved in the practice of co-habitation, which eventually can change their sexual orientation and sexual relations. Interventions targeted at the peer groups, friends and acquaintances will surely help in correcting opinions and behaviours that might be a deviant from the normal societal norms and values. Other factors that can influence students in co-habiting include being in a strong emotional relationship, to test for compatibility, high divorce rate and desire for sex on a regular basis.

PRECEDE MODEL

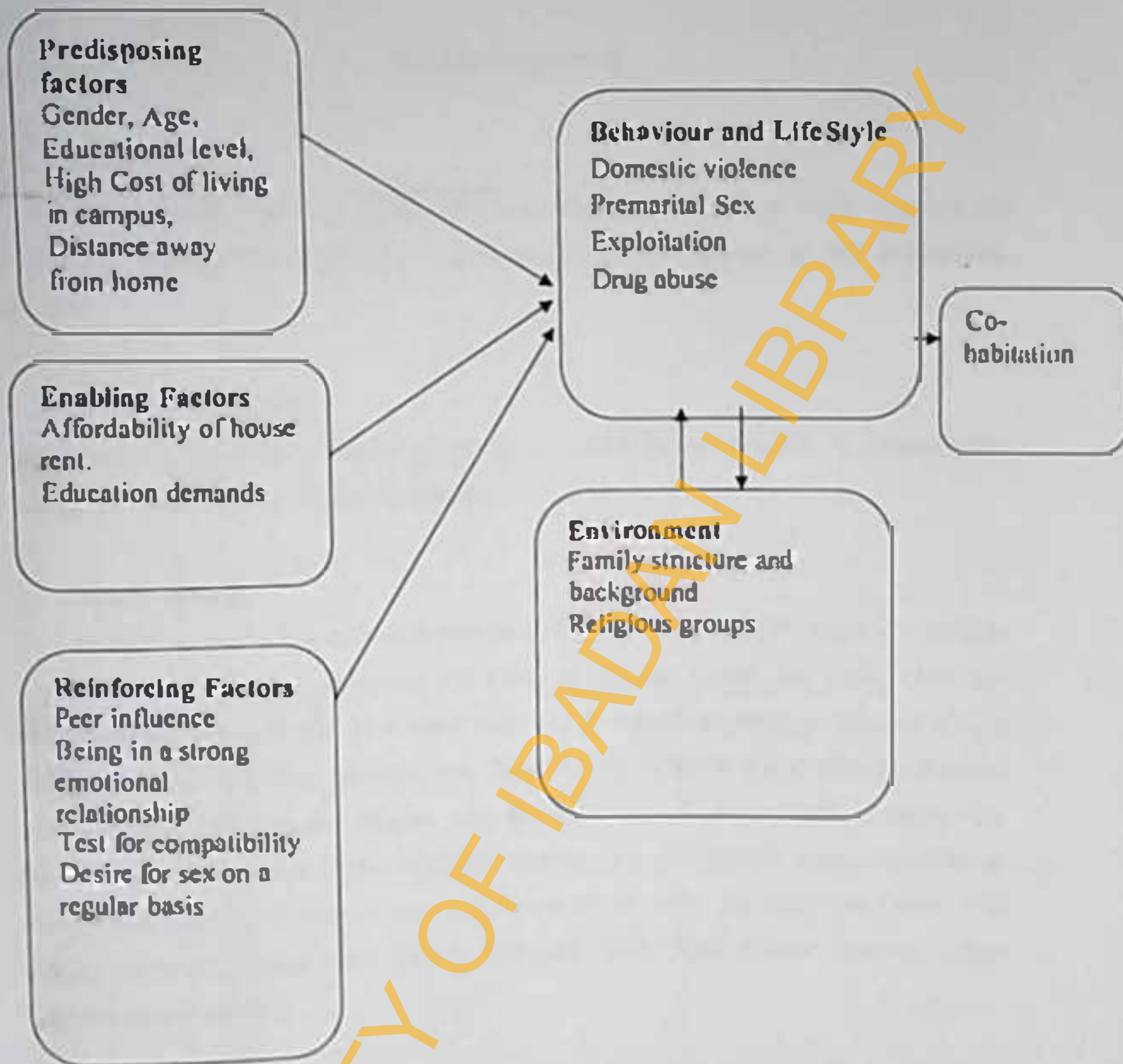


Figure 2.1

Source: Modified from Green and Kreuter, 1999

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Study design

A descriptive cross sectional design was used for this study. The study assessed the perception, attitude and practice of co-habitation among students of The Polytechnic Ibadan.

3.2 Scope of the study

The scope of the study is limited to perception, attitude and practice of co-habitation among students of The Polytechnic Ibadan.

3.3 Study Setting

This study was carried out at The Polytechnic, Ibadan. Since 1975/76 academic session, The Polytechnic, Ibadan has been operating on faculty system for easier work co-ordination and management. At present, there are five faculties with a population of over 19000 students. The five faculties are: Engineering, Science, Environmental Studies, Financial and Management Studies and Business and Communication Studies. The faculties run National and Higher National Diploma. The Polytechnic main campus has at present four Halls of Residence with a total capacity of 4000. The Halls are: Orisun Hall (South Campus), Ramat Hall (North Campus), Unity Hall (North Campus), Olori Hall (Female Hostel).

Only bonafide registered full time students of the polytechnic are allowed to live in the hall of residence. However, The Polytechnic has rules and regulation that guide students' sexual and social activities on campus. Visitors of the opposite sex can be received in the common room only and not in the student bedroom (Students' Information Handbook, The polytechnic Ibadan, 2010). According to records, the four Halls of Residence can only accommodate 4000 students while other students are expected to find accommodation in neighbouring communities. Majority of the students live nearby around campus, namely; Apele, Eleyele, Ajibode and Sango area in Ibadan. Accommodation has been a daunting issue among students of higher institution in Nigeria. This is due to the inadequate provision of accommodation facilities within the

Polytechnic. Many of the students during the course of this study agreed that they live off-campus, of which the guiding rules' regulating this lifestyle does not extend to students living outside the campus.

3.4 Study Population

The study population consists of all the students of The Polytechnic, Ibadan main campus admitted for full-time academic programme of the institution.

Table 3.1: Faculties and the Population of full time students in the Polytechnic of Ibadan 2013/2014 academic sessions.

Faculties	No of females	No of males	Total population
Business and communication studies	1003	1032	2035
Engineering	90	1343	1433
Environmental studies	513	509	1022
Financial management	1133	619	1752
Science	1200	965	2165
Total	3423	4984	8407

Source: Vocational Skills and Entrepreneurship Study Unit, The Polytechnic, Ibadan.

3.5 Inclusion criteria

Only registered full-time students of the Polytechnic, Ibadan both National Diploma and Higher National Diploma in the main campus were included in the study.

3.6 Exclusion criteria

This study excluded students on preliminary programmes as well as Part-time or sandwich in the polytechnic. This is because students running these programmes are not regular students and their academic calendar is different from the regular students.

3.7 Determination of sample size

The sample size (n) was determined by using Leslie Kish's (1965) sample size formula:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 p(1-p)}{d^2}$$

Where n=minimum sample size required

Z= confidence limit of survey at 95% (1.96)

P= Proportion of premarital co-habitors taken at 61% (Kline, Scott and Stanley, 2004)

d=absolute deviation from true value (degree of accuracy) = 5%

$$n = \frac{1.96^2 \times 0.61 \times 0.39}{0.05^2} = 365.56 \text{ approximate} = 366$$

$$\text{A non-response rate of 10\% of 366} = \frac{366 \times 10}{100} = 36.6$$

were added to the sample size calculated to make sample size 410. In order to address any possible case of incomplete response.

3.8 Sampling Technique

A multistage sampling technique involving two stages was used in selecting respondents for this study. The sampling technique involved all the faculties. All the five faculties were used for the study

Stage one: 16 out of 32 departments were selected from all five faculties using tables of random number

Stage two: Stratified sampling was used to select the number of students taking into consideration the sex ratio of students in each of the faculties. Proportionate sampling technique was used to determine the number of students from each of the faculties (see table 3.2 for details). Eligible students met in the lecture rooms were purposively selected for the study.

Table 3.2: Distribution of respondents from each faculty

S/N	FACULTIES	Departments	Number of students in each Dept.	Number of students in each Faculty	Female students in each Faculty	Male students in each Faculty	Proportion of female respondents that were selected in each Faculty	Proportion of male respondents that were selected in each Faculty
1.	Business and communication studies	Mass comm.	517	2035	1003	1032	49	50
		Marketing	457					
		Music tech	494					
		Purchasing & supply	567					
2.	Engineering	Civil Eng	404	1433	90	1343	4	65
		Electrical Eng	617					
		Mechanical Eng	412					
3.	Environmental studies	Architecture	225	746	235	511	12	25
		Building	217					
		Estate mgt	304					
4.	Financial mgt studies	Accountancy	431	2028	895	1133	44	55
		Banking & Finance	337					
		Insurance	365					
5.	Science	Statistics	993	2165	1200	965	59	47
		Microbiology	609					
		Computer science	563					
	TOTAL	16 departments	8407	8407	3423	4984	168	242

3.9 Method and instruments for data collection

The data were obtained using both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. In-depth interview guide was developed based on the research objective. The instruments were developed after thorough literature review and supervisor went through the developed instrument.

In-depth interviews (IDI)

The in-depth interview guide was developed based solely on the research questions in order to achieve the aim of the study. Only respondents who indicated in the questionnaire that they are currently cohabitating and had practiced co-habitation were recruited to participate in the in-depth interview. The IDI guide has 4 main questions; the questions were framed to give further insights into the following issues: how common is co-habitation among students on campus, factors influencing the practice of co-habitation among students, consequences of co-habitation and the benefits derived from the practice of co-habitation.

Responses were tape recorded with the consent of the participants and open ended discussions about designated questions were encouraged. Outcome of the in-depth interview were used in the modification of the draft questionnaire.

Survey

The quantitative data was collected with the use of a semi-structured questionnaire that was administered by the researcher with the assistance of four trained field assistants. The semi-structured questionnaire was self-administered as participants were able to read and write. The questionnaire included the socio-demographic section (Section A). Section B elicited information on the perception. Section C constituted information on the attitude towards co-habitation. Section D consisted questions on the practice of co-habitation in the Polytechnic. Section E consisted questions on factors influencing co-habitation and Section F constituted information on the perceived effects of co-habitation.

3.10 Validity of the instrument

Validity of the instrument was ensured through the development of a draft instrument by consulting relevant literatures, subjecting the draft to independent, peer and expert reviews, particularly expert in public health and comments from supervisor was used to further fine-tune the instruments.

3.11 Reliability of the Instrument

The instrument was pre-tested, using 10% of the sample size calculated. The instruments, questionnaire and in-depth interview guide were pre-tested among the students of The Polytechnic Ibadan Saki Campus, Oyo state. The IDI guide was administered among three male students and three female students who were presently co-habiting, they were identified during the pretest of the questionnaire. The responses from the in-depth interviews were used to develop a semi-structured questionnaire for the survey components.

The questionnaire was pre-tested among 41 students in all the three faculties of The Polytechnic, Ibadan, Saki satellite campus. The pretested questionnaires were cleaned, coded, and entered into the computer. The reliability of the questionnaire was determined using Cronbach's Alpha model techniques of SPSS (version 16). The reliability coefficient was 0.96 implying that the instrument was very reliable (the closer the coefficient is to 1, the more reliable the instrument is). Revisions were made on the instruments before they were finally used. The word "couple's life" was added to 'co-habitation' in bracket because quite a number of students indicated they didn't understand the word. More advantages of co-habitation were added due to the IDI responses.

3.12 Training of Field Assistants

Four field assistants were recruited and trained for a day. The training focused on the objectives and importance of the study, the sampling procedure, administering of the research instruments, how to secure respondents' informed consent and interviewing skills. The study instruments were discussed in details during the course of the training.

3.13 Procedure for data Collection

The data collection procedures adopted are described as follows:

Semi-structured questionnaire

The quantitative data were collected using the semi-structured questionnaire (see appendix II) with the help of four field assistants. The questionnaire was self-administered since the research assistant could read and write in English language. The copies of the questionnaire were administered during break time at the love garden, laboratories, free lecture room. Consent of the participants was sought before the

administration of the questionnaire after explaining to them the purpose of the research and benefits of the research. The questionnaire was collected immediately a respondent is through with it. After a field assistant had collected a questionnaire from a respondent, he/she checked for completeness of the questionnaire. In addition, the field assistant instantly checked a completed questionnaire to determine if a respondent was suitable for further in-depth interview. After confirming the suitability of a respondent, availability and willingness to participate in an in-depth interview was then sought.

In-depth interview (IDI)

The retrieved copies of the questionnaire were used to determine those who were to be involved in the IDI. Purposive sampling method was adopted in selecting respondents for the In-Depth Interviews to ensure that the selection of respondents is based on availability and relevance to the study. Only those who had cohabited and presently co-habiting were involved in the IDI. Consent of the participants was sought before being involved in the in-depth interviews. The eight students who gave their consent were immediately interviewed using the IDI guide (see appendix 1) after the survey. In-depth interview sessions were recorded on audio tapes.

3.14 Data Management

The principal investigator checked all copies of administered questionnaire one after the other for purpose of completeness and accuracy. Serial number was assigned to each question for easy identification and for correct data entry and analysis. A coding guide was developed to code and enter each question into the computer for analysis. Analysis was done with the use of Statistical package SPSS version 16. The data entered into the computer was subjected to descriptive (mean, percentages, frequencies and standard deviation) and inferential (Chi-Square) statistical analyses. Finally, information obtained were summarised and presented in tables and charts. The in-depth interview responses were recorded on audio tapes, transcribed and analyzed using thematic approach.

Perception was measured on a 30-point scale, each correct answer was scored 2 while incorrect answer was scored 0; scores of ≤ 14 , >14 were categorized as negative and positive respectively. Attitude towards co-habitation was measured on a 30-point scale of which correct answer was scored 1 and incorrect answer was scored 0; scores of ≤ 14 were

categorised as negative attitude score and scores of >14 were categorized as positive attitude score.

3.15 Ethical considerations:

Prior to the commencement of the study, ethical approval was obtained from the Oyo State Ethical Review Committee (see appendix IV). The committee helped to ensure that the research work conforms to the generally accepted scientific principles and international ethical guideline required in human subjects' research. Permission was also obtained from the Student's Affairs Office of the Polytechnic, Ibadan.

The nature, purpose and processes involved in the study were explained to the participants with emphasis on confidentiality, privacy and anonymity of information provided. No identifier such as name of participants was required and all information provided was kept confidential. Information gathered from the respondents was stored in the computer package for analysis by the principal investigator and with no access to unauthorized persons.

However, participants were given opportunity to withdraw their consent freely during the study.

3.16 Limitation of the study

Some of the respondents held back some facts to themselves due to the sensitivity surrounding the practice. However efforts were made to reduce these challenges by assuring the respondents of confidentiality of all information provided.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

4.1 Respondents' socio-demographic characteristics

The socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 4.1. Respondents were within the age range 16-30 years. Most of the respondents 234 (57.2%) were within the age group 21-25, followed by 140 (34.0%) respondents who fell within the age group 16-20 and lastly 36(8.8%) respondents fell within the age group 26-30 with the mean of 21.83 ± 3.0 years. Respondents consisted of 59.3% males and 40.7% females.

Majority of the respondents 388(94.6%) were Yoruba, 17(4.1%) were Igbo, 4(1%) Ijaw and one respondent (0.2%) was Edo. Three hundred and ninety-two respondents (95.6%) were single. Most of the respondents 292(71.2%) were Christians while 116(28.3) were Muslims and 2(0.5) were traditionalists. Two hundred and sixty-four respondents (64.4%) stay off campus, 60(14.6%) are resident in Unity hall, thirty-five (8.5%) are resident in Rainet hall, 26(6.3%) are resident in Orisun hall while 25(6.1%) are resident in Olori hall.

Table 4.1: Socio- Demographic of the Respondents

Socio-demographic characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
16-20	140	34.0
21-25	234	57.2
26-30	36	8.8
Sex		
Male	243	59.3
Female	167	40.7
Religion		
Christianity	292	71.2
Islam	116	28.3
Traditional	2	0.5
Marital Status		
Single	392	95.6
Married	15	3.7
Divorced	3	0.7
Hall of residence		
Orisun hall	26	6.3
Ramat hall	35	8.5
Unity hall	60	14.6
Olori hall	25	6.1
Off-campus	264	64.4
Ethnic group		
Yoruba	388	94.6
Igbo	17	4.2
I Hausa	4	1.0
Other (Ife)	1	0.2

4.2.: Perception towards co-habitation

Respondents' perceptions towards co-habitation are presented in Table 4.2. Most of the respondents (55.4%) agreed that co-habitation gives a fore hand knowledge of who a partner is before marriage while 186(44.6%) disagreed. Majority of the respondents reported that their parents would not approve co-habitation 326(79.5) while 84(20.5%) reported parent approval. One hundred and fifty-five respondents (37.8%) reported sexual relationship, 130(31.7%) test before marriage and 125(30.5%) avoid being lonely as the main reason for co-habitation among students. Majority 237(57.8%) of the respondents disagreed that co-habitation contribute to the reduction of divorce rate. Also, 347(84.7%) of the respondents agreed that co-habiting partners engage in premarital sex. Furthermore, three hundred and thirty-two respondents (81.0%) agreed that co-habitation is the reason for the rising number of unwanted pregnancy and teen childbearing on campus.

The above reason for engaging in co-habitation was corroborated by the in-depth interview where participants stated that co-habitation gives partner the opportunity to learn, test and possibly adjust to each other before the decision to marry is made. A female participant stated *'only if you live together, you can get to know this person truly, and see, whether he is the right person for the next stage of life, or for the rest of your life.'* Similarly another participant stated that *'we get to know each other and learn about our shortcomings pretty quickly.'*

Respondents who had positive perception were 336(82.0) (Figure 4.1). More respondents 192(46.8%) in the age group 21-25 years had positive perception than age group 16-20 years and 26-30 years ($p < 0.05$). The result showed that there was a significant relationship between the sex of respondents and perception towards co-habitation as positive perception was more among male respondents (46.3%) than female respondents ($p < 0.05$). Religion had no significant relationship with perception towards co-habitation. (Table 4.3)

Table 4.2: Perception towards co-habitation

Statement	Agreed n (%)	Disagreed n (%)	Total n (%)
Co-habitation gives a fore hand knowledge of who a partner is before marriage is before marriage	227(55.4)	183(44.6)	410(100)
My parents would not approve co-habitation	326(79.5)	84(20.5)	410(100)
Co-habitation contributes to the reduction of divorce rate	173(42.2)	237(57.8)	410(100)
The media (e.g. movies, music) influences your opinion about co-habitation	303(73.9)	107(26.1)	410(100)
Co-habiting partners plans to marry themselves	230(56.1)	180(43.9)	410(100)
Co-habiting partners engage in premarital sex	347(84.7)	63(15.3)	410(100)
Students who are co-habiting will perform better academically than those not co-habiting	94(22.9)	316(77.1)	410(100)
Co-habitation is one of the reasons for the rising number of unmarried pregnant women and teen child bearing among students on campus.	332(81.0)	78(19.0)	410(100)
Those who live before marriage have higher separation and divorce rate.	249(60.7)	161(39.3)	410(100)
Partners' co-habiting constantly blame and criticize each other for any little mistake committed by any of the co-habitors.	312(76.1)	98(23.9)	410(100)
It's all right for a boy and a girl who cohabit to have sex if they use methods to prevent pregnancy.	179(43.7)	231(56.3)	410(100)
Lack of sexual faithfulness of co-habiting partners may lead to having multiple sex partners which can lead to spread of infections.	339(82.7)	71(17.3)	410(100)
A boy will not respect a girl who agrees to cohabit with him.	264(64.4)	146(35.6)	410(100)
There is more opportunity to study with the opposite sex	239(58.3)	171(41.7)	410(100)

*No responses were excluded

Table 4.3: Distribution of participants perception on co-habitation by selected socio-demographic variables (N=410)

Socio demographic variables	Negative	Positive	Total	X ²	Pvalue
Age (years)					
16-20	21(15.0%)	119(85.0%)	140(100.0%)	6.09	0.048
21-25	41(17.6%)	192(82.4%)	233(100.0%)		
26-30	12(32.4%)	25(67.6%)	37(100.0%)		
Total	74(18.0%)	336(82.0%)	410(100.0%)		
Sex					
Male	53(21.8%)	190(78.2%)	243(100.0%)	5.71	0.017
Female	21(12.6%)	146(87.4%)	167(100.0%)		
Total	74(18.0%)	336(82.0%)	410(100.0%)		
Religion					
Christianity	56(19.2%)	236(80.8%)	292(100.0%)	2.54	0.281
Islam	17(14.7%)	99(85.3%)	116(100.0%)		
Traditional	1(50%)	1(50%)	2(100.0%)		
Total	74(18.0%)	336(82.0%)	410(100.0%)		

4.3: Attitudes toward co-habitation

Respondents' responses to attitudinal statements are presented in Table 4.4a and 4.4b with the mean attitude score of 21.0 ± 4.5 . Majority of the respondents (89%) had positive attitude toward co-habitation. Three hundred and five (74.4%) respondents were against the practice of co-habitation while 105 (25.6%) respondents were in support of co-habitation. Respondents who were against co-habitation stated 149 (36.3%) premarital sex, 99 (24.2%) religion, 50 (12.2%) poor academic performance and 15 (3.7%) marital instability as the reason for not supporting co-habitation. Advantages of co-habitation among students include 272 (66.3%) testing before marriage, 291 (71%) emotional support, 288 (70.2%) learning to trust each other, 274 (66.8%) financial support, 248 (60.5%) strengthens love and 295 (72%) co-habitors can change partner without any legal procedures. Reported consequences of co-habitation among students included 379 (92.4%) exposes students to premarital sex while 31 (7.6%) disagreed, 377 (92.0%) unwanted pregnancy, 377 (92.0%) abortion, 318 (77.6%) poor academic performance, 364 (88.8%) sexually transmitted infections, 356 (86.8%) heart break, 309 (75.4%) suicide and 361 (88%) teen childbearing. Most of the respondent would not agree with their friend to cohabit 198 (48.3%).

When respondents were asked about what can hinder them from co-habitation, 336 (82%) identified parental disapproval, 336 (82%) identified religion, 263 (64.1%) society's view, 290 (70.7%) worries about children born during co-habitation, and 312 (76.1%) future marriage partner's view. Majority of the respondents reported that they would not be happy living with their partner before marriage 312 (76.1%), while 63 (15.4) would be very happy living with their partner before marriage and 35 (8.5%) would be pretty happy living with their partner. Majority of the respondents reported that they would not recommend co-habitation to anyone, including their siblings 358 (87.3%). Most of respondents also reported that they would leave partner if they found out that their partner is infected with a disease 251 (61.2%), 139 (33.9%) talk about it with partner and work it out, 11 (2.7%) continue co-habiting, and 9 (2.2%) get married. See details in Table 4.4.

The result of the relationship between age of respondents and attitude towards co-habitation is presented in table 4.5. It was observed that the difference was not statistically significant ($X^2=0.770$, $DF=2$, $p<0.05$) between age of respondents and attitude towards co-habitation. It was observed that majority of the respondents (50.2%)

within the age group 21-25 years had positive attitude towards co-habitation than other age groups.

The in-depth interview participants were asked why they supported co-habitation. The respondents stated that *'it's worth to live together before marriage'*, *'it is good'*, and it makes for *'a super experience'*. Another respondent talked about co-habitation as *'nothing bad'*, and something they would recommend their siblings to do. One participant who had cohabited before stated that *'this learning before marriage leads to a situation when after the marriage it looks like an old marriage. There is no fascination and no more love again'*. Another participant stated that *'we are living together in order to satisfy our sexual urge'*.

Table 4.4a: Respondents' attitudes toward co-habitation

Statement	YES	N()
	n (%)	n (%)
Do you support co-habitation	105(25.6)	305(71.4)
Advantages		
Testing before marriage	272(66.3)	138(33.7)
Satisfying sexual desires	173(42.2)	237(57.8)
Saving money	172(42.0)	238(57.8)
Emotional support	291(71.0)	119(29.0)
Learning to trust each other	288(70.2)	122(29.8)
Financial support	274(66.8)	136(33.2)
Free to leave their life as they please	191(46.6)	219(53.4)
Strengthen love	249(60.7)	161(39.3)
Co-habitors can change partner without any legal procedures.	295(72.0)	115(28.0)
Disadvantages		
It exposes students to premarital sex	379(92.4)	31(7.6)
Unwanted pregnancy	377(92.0)	33(8.0)
Abortion	377(92.0)	33(8.0)
Poor academic performance	319(77.8)	91(22.2)
Sexually transmitted infections	364(88.8)	46(11.2)
Heart break	356(86.8)	54(13.2)
Suicide	309(75.4)	101(24.6)
Teen childbearing	361(88.0)	49(12.0)

Table 4.4b: Respondents' attitudes toward co-habitation

Statement	n (%)	
Friend who wants to cohabit with his or her love, would you agree with him or her?		
Yes	N	%
No	56	13.7
Up to him or her	199	48.5
I would recommend co-habiting to anyone, including my own sister or brother	155	37.8
Yes	N	%
No	52	12.7
	358	87.3
What would you do if you found out that your partner is infected with a disease		
Get married	9	2.2
Continue co-habiting	11	2.7
Talk about it with my partner and work it out	139	33.9
Leave partner	251	61.2
What can hinder you from co-habitation		
	Yes (%)	No (%)
Parental disapproval	336(82.0)	74(18.0)
Religion or custom	336(82.0)	74(18.0)
Society's view	263(64.1)	147(35.9)
Worries about children born during co-habitation	290(70.7)	120(29.3)
Future marriage partner's view	312(76.1)	98(23.9)

Table 4.5: Respondents' attitude on co-habitation with some socio-demographic variables

Socio demographic variables	Negative	Positive	Total	X ²	P value
Age (years)					
16-20	14(10.0)	126(90.0)	140(100.0%)	0.52	0.770
21-25	27(11.6)	206(88.4)	233(100.0%)		
26-30	3(8.1)	34(91.9)	37(100.0%)		
Total	44(10.7%)	366(89.3%)	410(100.0%)		
Sex					
Male	29(11.9%)	214(88.1%)	243(100.0%)	0.90	0.343
Female	15(9.0%)	152(91.0%)	167(100.0%)		
Total	44(10.7%)	366(89.3%)	410(100.0%)		
Religion					
Christianity	35(12.0%)	257(88.0%)	292(100.0%)	1.80	0.409
Islam	9(7.8%)	107(92.2%)	116(100.0%)		
Traditional	0(0.0%)	2(100.0%)	2(100.0%)		
Total	44(10.7%)	366(89.3%)	410(100.0%)		

4.4: Respondents' Practice of Co-habitation

Ninety five (23.2%) respondents reported that they have ever cohabited, of these 71(17.3%) reported that they have had a co-habiting partner, 16(3.9%) reported two co-habiting partners and 7(1.7%) reported more than three co-habiting partners. Furthermore 46(11.6%) reported that they are presently in a co-habiting relationship while 142 (34.6%) reported that their friend are co-habiting.

The in-depth interview participants were asked how common co-habitation on campus is. Majority of the participants stated that almost 50% of their friends are co-habiting.

One participant stated *'three out of my five friends are staying in the same room with their girlfriends including me'*

Similarly another participant declared that *'any of my friends who doesn't stay with his boyfriend might lose her boyfriend'*

The difference between sex of respondents and practice of cohabitation was found to be significant with more males 31(66.1%) cohabiting than females ($p<0.05$). Religion was also found to be significant with the practice of cohabitation. (Table 4.7)

Table 4.6: Respondents practice of co-habitation

Variables	N	%
Have you ever cohabited		
Yes	95	23.2
No	315	76.8
Number of co-habiting partners ever had		
A partner	71	74.7
Two partner	16	16.8
More than two partner	8	8.5
Presently co-habiting		
Yes	47	11.6
No	363	88.4

Table 4.7: Respondents' practice on co-habitation with some socio-demographic variables

Socio demographic variables	Yes	No	Total	X ²	Pvalue
Age (years)					
16-20	13(9.3%)	127(90.7%)	140(100.0%)	2.684	0.261
21-25	27(11.6%)	206(88.4%)	233(100.0%)		
26-30	7(18.9%)	30(81.1%)	37(100.0%)		
Total	47(11.6%)	363(88.4)	410(100.0)		
Sex					
Female	16(9.6%)	151(90.4%)	167(100.0%)	1.984	0.032
Male	31(12.8%)	212(87.2)	243(100.0%)		
Total	47(11.6%)	363(88.4%)	410(100.0%)		
Religion					
Christianity	24(8.2%)	268(91.8%)	292(100.0%)	11.283	0.004
Islam	23(19.8%)	93(80.2%)	116(100.0%)		
Traditional	0(0.0%)	2(100%)	2(100.0%)		
Total	47(11.6%)	363(88.4%)	410(100.0%)		

4.5: Reported factors promoting co-habitation among students

Majority 280(68.53%) of the respondent agreed that high cost of living on campus, 250(60.1%) to avoid multiple sexual partners, 287(70.0%) strong physical attraction, 248(60.5%) sharing of economic and domestic responsibilities, 296(72.2%) peer influence, 265(64.6%) desire to test compatibility, 273(66.6%) desire for intimacy and sex on a regular basis, 274(67.1) being in a strong emotional relationship, and 225(54.9) education demand that do not allow for early marriage are factors that promote co-habitation among students.

Slightly more than half of the respondents 233(56.8%) disagreed to the fact that fear of infertility and awareness of high divorce rate 220(53.7%) as factors promoting co-habitation. See details in table 4.7.

The in-depth interview participants were asked what prompted them to live with their boyfriend/girlfriend. Their responses affirmed the survey findings.

One participant stated that *'it seems to me that these divorces result from the fact that people didn't really know each other. A male participant also disclosed that 'am sponsoring myself and am lucky to have a girlfriend that is buoyant to pay for our house rent'. Another participant declared that 'my girlfriend help me financially when am broke'. another participant said that 'I live with him to satisfy him sexually, so that another girl wont snatch him from me'. Similarly another participant declared that 'I like having sex on a regular basis, my girl agreed to stay with me to avoid multiple sexual partner'.*

Table 4.8: Reported factors that promote co-habitation among students

Factors that promote co-habitation	Frequency N	Percentage (%)
Peer influence	296	72.2
Strong physical attraction towards someone	287	70.0
High cost of living on campus	280	68.3
Being in a strong emotional relationship	274	67.1
Desire for intimacy and sex on a regular basis	273	66.6
Desire to test compatibility for marriage	265	64.6
To avoid multiple sexual partners	250	61.0
Sharing of economic and domestic responsibilities	248	60.5
Education demand that do not allow for early marriage	225	54.9
Awareness of high divorce rate	190	46.3
Fear of infertility	177	43.2

•Mutually exclusive responses

4.6: Perceived Effects of co-habitation

The result of the perceived effect of co-habitation shows that majority 324(79.1%) of the respondents agreed that co-habiting partners separate for a while after graduating from school, 276(67.3%) agreed that co-habiting partner felt guilty at the beginning, during and after the relationship, 339(82.7%) agreed that breaking up between co-habiting partners could result into emotional trauma, more than half 370(90.2%) of the respondent agreed that rejection of pregnancy on the part of the male co-habitors may lead female co-habiter to abortion, 325(79.3%) agreed that frequent sexual intercourse often leads to sexually transmitted infections among co-habitors, and 329(80.2%) agreed that unwanted pregnancies will not stop as far as co-habitation continues.

Furthermore, 344(83.9%) of the respondents agreed that sex is paramount in a co-habiting relationship while 310(75.6%) agreed that co-habitors engage in domestic violence.

The in-depth interview participants were asked if there are limitations in their relationship.

One participant declared that 'I don't really like sex but anytime he ask for it. I don't hesitate because if I do, it will turn into fight' similarly another respondent stated that 'he ask for sex when am going for morning lecture'. Another female participant said 'he must not see me with male friends' similarly another participant stated that 'my friends don't visit me because my girlfriend is staying with me'. A male participant also stated that 'she often make me feel angry. I will beat her, lock her inside and leave the house'. We have known each other well and there is no feeling for her again'. Another male participant declared that 'am not old enough to be a father, she goes for abortion anytime she's pregnant'. Other results are Presented In table 4.6.

Table 4.9: Perceived Effects of Co-habitation

Perceived effects of co-habitation	Frequency N	Percentage %
Rejection of pregnancy on the part of male co-habitors may lead co-habitors to abortion	370	90.2
Sex is paramount in a co-habiting relationship	344	83.9
Breaking up between co-habiting partners could result into emotional trauma	339	82.7
Co-habiting partners participate in other activities with friends apart from their co-habiting partner	333	81.2
Unwanted pregnancies will not stop as far as co-habitation continues	329	80.2
Frequent sexual intercourse among co-habitors often leads to sexually transmitted infections	325	79.3
Co-habiting partners separate for a while after graduating from school	324	79.1
Co-habitors engage in domestic violence	310	75.6
Co-habitors often lay a foundation of distrust and lack respect for each other	301	73.4
Co-habitors lack lasting commitment and responsibility to their Partner	299	72.9
They feel guilty at the beginning, during or after the relationship	276	67.3
Co-habiting partners make decision independently	248	60.5

*Mutually exclusive responses

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

4.7 Hypothesis: There is no significant association between the age of respondents and those that have ever practiced co-habitation.

The result of the relationship between the age groups and practice of co-habitation is shown in Table 4.9.1. It was observed that the difference between the age and those that have co-habited was statistically significant ($\chi^2=0.001$, $DF=2$, $p<0.05$). From the result it could be seen that 50(12.2%) of the respondents within the age group 21-25 years reported that they have co-habited, followed by 27(6.6%) of the respondents within the age group 16-20years, while 18(4.4%) of the respondents reported within the age group 26-30 years.

Table 4.10: Relationship between the age of respondents and Practice of co- habitation

	Have you ever co-habited?		Total
	Yes	No	
Age group			
16-20 years	27(6.6)	113(27.6)	140(34.1)
21-25 years	50(12.2)	183(44.6)	233(56.8)
26-30years	18(4.4)	19(4.6)	37(9.0)
Total	95(23.2)	315(76.8)	410(100)

$\chi^2=15.06$, $p=0.001$, $df=2$

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Discussion of findings

5.1.1 Socio- Demographic characteristics of Respondents

Majority of the respondents were single and more are within 21-25 years old, implying that they were mostly young people. This also shows the liberty such single students engage in while in school. The value of institution of marriage has reduced the incidence of cohabitation among students who were already married. More than half of the respondents were males, a trend which has also been observed in a similar studies involving young people in higher institutions of learning (Ojikutu, Adeleke, Yusuf and Ajijola, 2010; Folaranni and Gbatalola, 2008). The result also shows that majority were Christians, this is because the southern part of Nigeria which majority of the respondents comes from are Christians (Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life, 2010). The fact that majority of the respondents 94.6% were of the Yoruba ethnic group of the country could be traced to the fact that the study area is located in the south western region where the predominant ethnic group are Yorubas (Olaniyi, 2009). Most of the respondents stay off campus, this could be traced to the inability of the institutions to expand new hostels which had forced students to look outward for accommodation (Abubakar, 2008).

5.1.2 Perception towards Co-habitation among students of the

Polytechnic, Ibadan.

Most of the respondents 55.4% agreed that co-habitation gives a fore hand knowledge of who a partner is before marriage. This is consistent with previous studies on co-habitation (Glenn, 2005; Thornton & Young Demarco, 2001; Smith, 2005; Smock, Manning & Porter, 2006) which revealed that majority of young people believe that co-habitation provides a good test for compatibility. Majority 79.5% reported that their parent would not approve co-habitation; this is similar to a previous studies (Joyce, 2008) which found out that co-habitors often face parental disapproval. The environments in higher institutions of learning in Nigeria are characterized by high level of personal freedom and social interactions. There is need for parent to form the habits of paying unscheduled visits to their wards in order to ascertain what they are up to in school.

Co-habitation has been shown to be associated with high rates of divorce (Amato et al 2003; Cohan & Kleinbaum, 2002; Stanley et al., 2004) such situation was noted in this study. The findings in this current study showed that 57.8% of respondents agreed that co-habitation increases divorce rate. Respondents reported 'sexual relationship' overall 37.8%, with test before marriage 31.7% as the second most popular reason for co-habitation among students. This result can be linked to Waite and Gallagher (2000) study which revealed that co-habiting men and women make love on average between seven and a half times a month, or about one extra sex at month than married people. The mass media has presented co-habitation as a healthy and acceptable living arrangement (National Marriage Project, Rutgers University: 2002). A large number of respondents (73.9%) agreed with the perception that the media is an influence to their opinion on co-habitation. Young people's exposure to sexual content through television, music videos, x-rated films, internet and other electronic media during developmental period when sexual attitudes and sexual behaviour are being shaped may be the reason for their perception towards co-habitation.

More than half of the respondents (56.1%) reported that co-habiting partners plans to marry. The results can be related to Smock (2000) study in the United State which found out that 75% of co-habitors plan to marry their partner. Large number of respondents 84.7% reported that co-habitors engage in premarital sex which share the same sentiment with Atiyaba and Naidoo (2005) study which revealed greater proportion in the numbers of those who cohabit and engage in premarital sex among South Africa university students. This is revealing in that premarital sex occurs and appears to be increasing as adolescents delay marriage for the purpose of acquiring formal education. Most of the respondent (77.1%) disagreed with the perception that students who cohabit will perform better academically than those not co-habiting. This suggests that co-habiting relationships affect their academic performances adversely. This result is in line with Abubakar, (2008) report which stated that students, whose major purpose of coming to the tertiary institutions is to acquire knowledge, turn around to combine 'married life with academic life' usually face less level of concentration in school.

Large number of respondents (81.09%) reported co-habitation as the reason for the rising number of unwanted pregnancy and teen childbearing among students on campus. This

result is in support of National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy in the United State (2001) report which revealed that more than two-thirds of pregnancies to co-habiting women are unplanned.

5.1.3 Attitudes towards Co-habitation among Students of The Polytechnic, Ibadann.

The attitudes of the respondents toward co-habitation could be observed from their responses. An appreciable number of respondents (74.4%) disagreed with living together before marriage. This result is in contrast to Thorton and Demarco (2001) study in U.S among high school students which revealed that majority of the students agrees that it is a good idea for couple to live together before marriage. Most of the respondents (66.3%) reported testing before marriage as an advantage of co-habitation. This suggested that respondents assessing compatibility through 'trial marriage', is important. King and Scott's (2005) study in the US using the National Survey of Families and Household reports, that compatibility assessment by younger cohabitators was a key reason for co-habitation. More than half of the respondents (57.1%) disagreed to the fact that saving money is an advantages of co-habitation. This result contradicts some of the assertion of Manning and Smock (2005); Sassler (2004), who found out that young adult move in together to save money on rent and other living expenses.

Findings from the study also reveal that a majority of the respondents (72.0%) agreed that co-habitors can change partner without any legal procedures. Ending a co-habiting relationship is less complicated and cheaper than ending a marriage since it is not protected by law. This is in corroboration with the observation of Stranton (2002) that found out that living together does not provide a legally binding document in which both partners are protected by law like marriage licence does. Also according to National Marriage Project, Rutgers University (2002), report that breaking up in a co-habiting relationship is easier because couples do not need to seek civil or religious permission to dissolve their union.

Majority of the respondents (72.0%) reported emotional support as benefit derived from co-habitation. This finding is in contrast to Raley (2004) study which found out that marriage provides a strong emotional support that is lacking in a co-habitation arrangement. Married people feel more emotionally satisfied with their lives because they

feel strong emotional connection with their spouse. Large number of the respondent (92.4%) reported that co-habitors engage in premarital sex. This finding is similar to Alo and Akinde (2010) study which revealed that the rise in premarital sex in Nigerian higher institutions is intrinsically linked to the practice of co-habitation. The National HIV/AIDS and Reproductive Health survey (2003), similarly reveal that co-habitation as one of the factors engineering the illicit sexual behaviours of Nigerians

Most of the respondents (92.0%) agreed that co-habitation lead to unwanted pregnancy among students that practice it. This result is similar to Schmidt (2012) study in the United States that found out that unintended pregnancy rates highest among co-habiting individuals. Since the purpose of co-habiting is as a trial relationship, then any pregnancy in a co-habitation relationship is unwanted. This finding is also similar to Abubakar's (2008) study which revealed that co-habitors are fond of getting unwanted pregnancies, and that the incidence has contributed to the increase level of abortion among young girls despite early exposure to the use of contraceptives.

Findings also show that majority of the respondents (88.0%) reported sexually transmitted infection as consequences of co-habitation. This finding is similar to the findings of a research carried out by Ogunisola (2004), which showed that co-habiting students will most likely engage in unprotected sex which could result to sexually transmitted infections and the much dreaded HIV/AIDS disease. According to Alo (2008) study which reveals that student who date and don't have sex, can easily forget about that relationship when they stop dating. But if where premarital sex is involved, before the break up, the nature of sexual involvement creates strong and unpleasant memories. This was observed in this study, 84.8% of the respondent reported heart break as consequences of co-habitation among co-habitors. A large number of the respondents (87.3%) reported that they would not recommend co-habitation to anyone including their siblings despite the benefits derived from co-habitation. This indicated that the disadvantages of the co-habitation practice outweigh the advantages. Most of the respondents (61.2%) indicated that they would leave their partner if they found out he or she is infected with a disease.

5.1.4 Practice of Co-habitation among students of The Polytechnic, Ibadan

A total of 23.2% of the respondents indicated that they had cohabited. This finding is similar to Hacker (2012) study in the United States which revealed that 26% of college students have ever cohabited. The finding is in contrast with Schmidt (2012) study in Salisbury which revealed 50% of college students have ever cohabited. Majority of the participant reported that 50% of their friends are co-habiting. Behaviours of individuals on campuses can also be explained by peer pressure. This indicates that students whose friends are co-habiting might decide to hook up in a co-habiting relationship because of peer pressure. A finding from the study also reveals that 11.6% of the respondents are presently in a co-habiting relationship. The growing number of those who cohabit are made manifest in the high rate premarital pregnancy and spread of sexually transmitted infections (Mwaba & Naidoo, 2005).

Age was found to be a significant determinant of co-habitation. Respondents who were adolescents with ages ranging from 16-20 years and young adults whose age ranges 21-25 years were significantly practising co-habitation than older adult (aged 26-30 years). Adolescents' inadequate experience and lack of appreciation of the risks inherent in co-habitation may be the possible reason why they practice co-habitation. This is to be expected having just undergone transition from the secondary school to higher institution where students enjoy unrestricted freedom in terms of social life.

5.1.5 Factors promoting Co-habitation among students

Majority of the respondents (68.3%) reported high cost of living on campus as factor that promotes co-habitation among students. The same findings have been documented by previous researchers such as (Ogadinma, 2013 and Abubakar, 2008). This may be due to the inability of the institutions to expand or build more hostels and more students are been admitted more than the available hostels on campus. A large number of respondents (61.0%) agreed that students engage in co-habitation to avoid multiple sexual partners. The findings from this study suggest that students decide to cohabit with a partner to avoid multiple sexual partner and risk of sexually transmitted infection.

According to Ogadinma (2013) study which revealed that 94% of students cohabit with their lover to prevent others from snatching their partner from them. This could be noted in the study, 67.1% of the respondent reported that students cohabit when they are in a strong emotional relationship. Co-habitation has become a relationship that serves as an alternative to early marriage (Raley, 2004) indicating that early marriage is being replaced by co-habitation (Bumpass and Lu 2000). This was also revealed in the study, more than half of the respondent (54.9%) reported that students cohabit because of education demand that do not allow early marriage. A large number of respondents (72.2%) reported that peer influence students in co-habiting. This finding is similar to the Institute of Marital Healing. West Conshocken (2007) report which revealed that students feel pressured by friends and colleagues to move in together once they are engaged. These misperceptions of behaviour create pressure and can affect choices in terms of whether to decide to be in a co-habiting relationship.

5.1.6 Perceived effects of Co-habitation

Majority of the respondents (67.3%) reported that co-habitors feel guilty at the beginning, during or after the relationship. This indicates that co-habitors often feel guilt, remorse and fearful because of the danger of sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancy. A large number of respondents (83.9%) also reported that premarital sex is paramount in a co-habiting relationship. Male partner demand for sex as a proof of love from female partner, there is no ego and physical desire to satisfy and female partner will be used to fulfil it.

Co-habitation involves no public commitment, no pledge for the future, no official pronouncement of love and responsibility. It's a private arrangement based on a romantic bond. This was noted in the study, 72.9% of respondents reported that co-habitors lack lasting commitment and responsibility to their partner. Romance, in today's society, is hastily devised and easily discarded at the sign of conflict.

According to Ogadinma (2013) study that revealed that female students are most time physically abuse and rape by male students in a co-habiting relationship. This was also noted in this study, 75.6% of respondents agreed that co-habitors engage in domestic violence.

5.2 Implications of the findings for Health Promotion and Education

Though students were found to have positive perception and positive attitude towards co-habitation, one would have expected that this would have translated into practice but this result is pointing to the contrary as their sexual behaviour does not reflect these values.

Cohabitation practice was found to be practiced by 11.6% of the study population at the time of the study which is of public health significance. The findings from the study suggest that polytechnic students are being influenced by friends or peers in co-habiting. The study recommends polytechnics to develop policies, programmes and strategies to address sexual behaviours issues targeting students using peer-based interventions. The health promotion and education strategies could be used to design and develop a training curriculum for selected peers in the institution based on the findings of this study.

The polytechnic should inculcate the idea of safe sexual practices in their orientation programme to direct attention at the students that come in newly into the institution. And also the General Studies programme of the polytechnic should include a module on safe sexual practices and healthy life styles among students. Use of billboards, posters or banners within the polytechnic environment, educating the students on the importance of safe sexual practices is also recommended to influence positive sexual behavior. Parents should also be encouraged to have tough conversation with their wards and educate them about the risks of cohabitation. Saving the sexual relationship for marriage brings physical, emotional, and mental benefits to a couple.

Female students co-habiting their partner and don't negotiate condom use with male co-habitors which has serious implications. Female students bear by far the greatest reproductive health problems such as unintended pregnancy that could lead to abortions. And most times abortions are done in the back streets by quacks and suffer the complications of unsafe abortion. Sexual health is a state of physical, emotional, mental and social wellbeing in relation to sexuality and not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity (WHO, 2004). Sexual health requires positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experience, free of coercion and violence. Sexual health education can therefore be used both at home and in school to inform polytechnic students the risk associated with co-habiting relationship, danger of premarital sex, unwanted pregnancy and the consequences associated with it. Periodic evaluation is

know the efficiency of this method is also recommended so that necessary adjustments could be made.

5.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of this study showed that students of The Polytechnic, Ibadan engage in the practice co-habitation. Respondents had positive perception of, and attitude towards the practice of co-habitation. Those practicing co-habitation had experienced consequences that pose threat to their health such as unwanted pregnancy, abortion, sexually transmitted infections, heartbreak and suicide. Peer influence was identified as the major reasons why students cohabit on campus despite the perceived consequences that pose threat to their health. Positive perception towards co-habitation was more among males' respondents than female respondents even though the female students bear the greatest burden associated with the practice. There is need to address the practice of co-habitation in order to arrest the consequences of this risky sexual behaviour.

5.4 Recommendations

1. Awareness programmes to sensitize young people on co-habitation should be included in life building skills programme for young people to help them make informed decisions and as young people practice co-habitation out of emotions, practicing for marriage and sexual intimacy.
2. Tertiary institutions' management should work in partnership with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to educate students on sex and family life issues especially those relating to co-habitation.
3. Polytechnics should strengthen the counselling unit of the Institutions to provide more practical and effective counselling to young people on issues pertaining to marriage and family life.
4. Religious bodies within the institutions should make effort in encouraging young people to abstain from co-habitation and premarital sex; this will go a long way in minimizing premarital pregnancies and the spread of sexually transmitted infections.
5. Peer education programmes within tertiary institutions is recommended to educate students on reproductive and sexual health.

5.9.1 Suggestions for further study

There is need to examine the issue of co-habitation at colleges and universities throughout the nation. It would be interesting to derive a larger sample and various populations as well as to compare various groups to represent all other institutions of higher learning in the country. The result would proffer effective solutions that would be more generalized.

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APPENDIX I

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE

Introduction

I am a postgraduate student of the Department of Health Promotion and Education, Faculty of Public Health College of Medicine University of Ibadan. I thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. The interview focuses on Perceptions, Attitudes and Practice of co-habitation among Students of the Polytechnic Ibadan, Oyo State. We have specially invited you to come and share your views with us because there is a limit to our knowledge. We crave your indulgence to use a tape recorder because there is a limit to what the brain can remember and we do not want to forget the useful experiences we are here to share. We assure you that the information you give will not be used in anyway against any one. All information will be kept confidential. Thanks

SNO	MAIN QUESTION	FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS
1	How common is co-habitation among students in this institution of learning?	Probe for occurrences among males and females
2	Most students' cohabit in this institution. Why is this?	Probe for motivating factors To avoid being lonely As a test before marriage. For sexual relationship Financial support To pass exams Emotional support To satisfy sexual desire Lack of accommodation
3	What are the consequences of co-habitation among students in these institution of learning?	Probe for Heart break? Unwanted pregnancy? STIs Distrust and lack respect for each other Domestic violence Drop out of schools Suicide Teen child bearing
4	What are the benefits associated with this practice?	Probe for the benefits and other challenges.

APPENDIX II

QUESTIONNAIRE

PERCEPTIONS, ATTITUDES AND PRACTICE OF CO-HABITATION AMONG STUDENTS OF THE POLYTECHNIC, IBADAN, NIGERIA

Dear Respondent,

My name is **OLANIRAN OLASUNBO CONSTANCE**, am currently a postgraduate student Health Promotion and Education of Faculty of Public Health in the University College Hospital in Ibadan area of Oyo State. I am currently undertaking a study to determine perceptions, attitudes and practice of Co-habitation among students of the Polytechnic, Ibadan. The research is primarily in partial fulfillment for the award of the degree of Masters in public Health in Health Promotion and Education of the University of Ibadan. Your sincere response is encouraged as participation in this study is voluntary, absolute anonymity and confidentiality shall be maintained.

If you have accepted to participate in the study, please indicate your interest by signing.

Thanks.

Respondent's Signature.....

Serial Number.....

Section A: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA.

Note: Please tick in the appropriate boxes

1. Faculty 2. R1 Hall { } 3. Unity Hall { }
2. Sex 2. R2 Hall { }
3. Hall of Residence: 1. Orisun Hall { } 2. R1 Hall { } 3. Unity Hall { }
4. Olori Hall { } 5. Off Campus { } 4. HND 2 { }
4. Level of study: 1. ND 1 { } 2. ND 2 { } 3. HND 1 { }
5. Age in years (at last birthday) 3. Traditional { }
6. Religion: 1. Christianity { } 2. Islam { } 3. House { }
4. Other (specify) _____
7. Ethnic Group: 1. Yoruba { } 2. Igbo { } 3. Hausa { }
4. Other (specify) _____
8. Marital status: 1. Single never married { } 2. Married { }
3. Others (specify) _____

SECTION B: PERCEPTION TOWARDS CO-HABITATION

Instruction: please tick the appropriate boxes that correspond to your answer in this section. Feel to be honest while answering the question in this section as all your responses will be kept secret.

9. Co-habitation (couple's life) gives a fore hand knowledge of who a partner is before marriage 1. Yes { } 2. No { }
10. What is the main reason for co-habitation among students? 1. To avoid being lonely { } 2. As a test before marriage { }
3. For sexual relationship { }

1. My parents would not approve co-habitation
 1. Yes { } 2. No { }

Instruction: Here are some statements relating to people's perception towards co-habitation. For each statement, indicate whether you strongly Agree [SA], Agree [A], Disagree [D] or strongly Disagree [SD].

NO	STATEMENT	SA	A	D	SD
12.	Co-habitation contributes to the reduction of divorce rate?				
13.	The media (e.g. movies, music) influences your opinion about co-habitation?				
14.	Co-habiting partners plans to marry themselves?				
15.	Co-habiting partners engage in premarital sex?				
16.	Students who are co-habiting will perform better academically than those not co-habiting?				
17.	Co-habitation is one of the reasons for the rising number of unmarried pregnant women and teen child bearing among students on campus.				
18.	Those who live before marriage have higher separation and divorce rate.				
19.	Partners' co-habiting constantly blame and criticize each other for any little mistake committed by any of the co-habitors.				
20.	It's all right for a boy and a girl who cohabit to have sex if they use methods to prevent pregnancy.				
21.	Lack of sexual faithfulness of co-habiting partners may lead to having multiple sex partners which can lead to spread of infections.				
22.	A boy will not respect a girl who agrees to cohabit with him.				
23.	There is more opportunity to study with the opposite sex				

SECTION C: ATTITUDES TOWARD CO-HABITATION

24. Do you support co-habiting?

1. Yes 2. No

25. Give reason for your response above

26. Tick either Yes or No for each one of the following you think is an advantage of co-habitation

	ADVANTAGES	YES	NO
A	Testing before marriage		
B	Satisfying sexual desires		
C	Saving money		
D	Emotional support		
E	Learning to trust each other		
F	Financial support		
G	Free to leave their life as they please		
H	Strengthen love		
I	Co-habitors can change partner without any legal procedures.		

27. Tick either Yes or No for each one of the following you think is a disadvantage of co-habitation

	DISVANTAGES	YES	NO
A	it exposes students to pre-marital sex		
B	Unwanted pregnancy		
C	Abortion		
D	Poor academic performance		
E	Sexually transmitted infections		
F	Heart break		
G	Suicide		
H	Teen childbearing		

28. If your friend wants to cohabit with his or her love, would you agree with him or her?

1. Yes { } 2. No { } 3. Up to him or her { }

29. Tick either Yes or No for each one of the following you think can hinder you from co-habitation

	STATEMENT	YES	NO
A	Parental disapproval		
B	Religion or custom		
C	Society's view		
D	Worries about children born during co-habitation		
E	Future marriage partner's view		

- 30. Would you be happy with yourself living together with your partner before marriage?
 - 1. Very happy { } 2. Pretty happy { } 3. not too happy { }
- 31. I would recommend co-habiting to anyone, including my own sister or brother.
 - 1. Yes { } 2. No { }
- 32. If you were to cohabit, would you divide housework evenly with your partner?
 - 1. Yes { } 2. No { }
- 33. What would you do if you found out that your partner is infected with a disease?
 - 1. Get married { } 2. Continue co-habiting { } 3. talk about it with my partner and work it out { } 4. leave partner { }

SECTION D: PRACTICE OF CO-HABITING PARTNERS

Instruction please tick the boxes where appropriate

- 34. I have ever cohabited?
 - (1) Yes { } (2) No { }
- 35. If yes, how many co-habiting partners have you had?
 - (2) No { }
- 36. Are you presently co-habiting? (1) Yes { } (2) No { }
- 37. How many of your friends are co-habiting?

SECTION E: FACTORS THAT PROMOTE CO-HABITATION AMONG STUDENTS

Instruction: Here are some statements relating to the factors that promote co-habitation. For each statement, indicate whether you strongly Agree [SA], Agree [A], Disagree [D] or strongly Disagree [SD].

NO	STATEMENT	SA	A	D	SD
38	High cost of living on campus.				
39	To avoid multiple sexual partners				
40	Strong physical attraction towards someone				
41	Sharing of economic and domestic responsibilities				
42	Fear of infertility				
43	Peer Influence				
44	Desire to test compatibility for marriage				
45	Desire for intimacy and sex on a regular basis				
46	Being in a strong emotional relationship				
47	Education demand that do not allow for early marriage				
48	Awareness of high divorce rate				

SECTION F: PERCEIVED EFFECTS OF CO-HABITATION ON STUDENTS

Instruction: Here are some statements relating to the consequences of co-habitation. For each statement, indicate whether you strongly Agree [SA], Agree [A], Disagree [D] or strongly Disagree [SD].

NO	STATEMENT	SA	A	D	SD
49.	Co-habiting partners make decision independently?				
50.	Co-habiting partners separate for a while after graduating from school?				
51.	They feel guilty at the beginning, during or after the relationship?				
52.	Co-habiting partners participate in other activities with friends apart from their cohabit partner?				
53.	Breaking up between co-habiting partners could result into emotional trauma				
54.	Rejection of pregnancy on the part of male co-habitors may lead female co-habitors to abortion.				
55.	Frequent sexual intercourse among co-habitors often leads to sexually transmitted infections.				
56.	Unwanted pregnancies will not stop as far as co-habitation continues.				
57.	Sex is paramount in a co-habiting relationship				
58.	Co-habitors engage in domestic violence.				
59.	Co-habitors lack lasting commitment and responsibility to their partner.				
60.	Co-habitors often lay a foundation of distrust and lack respect for each other.				

Thank you for participating in this survey.

APPENDIX III

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

IRB Research approval Number.....

This Approval will elapse on:

PERCEPTION, ATTITUDE, AND PRACTICE OF CO-HABITATION AMONG STUDENTS OF THE POLYTECHNIC, IBADAN, NIGERIA

This study is being conducted by Olaniran, Oluksunbo Constance of the Department of Health Promotion and Education, College of Medicine, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria. The purpose of the research is to determine the perception, attitude and practice of Co-habitation among students of The Polytechnic, Ibadan, Nigeria.

In order to effectively carry out this study, I will obtain information from you using a structured self-administered questionnaire. Please note that all questionnaire used to elicit information used to elicit information in this study will be assigned code numbers and as such information collected cannot be linked to you. Code numbers or any identifier will not be used in any publications or reports from this study.

There are no risks or harm associated with this research. Your participation in this research will cost you nothing other than sincerity of information given. I will greatly appreciate your participation in this research. Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary and if you choose not to participate, it will not affect anything.

Statement of person obtaining informed consent:
I have fully explained this research to the participants and have given sufficient information, including information about risks and benefits, to make an informed decision.

DATE _____/_____/_____

SIGNATURE: _____

NAME _____

Statement of the person giving consent:

I have read the description of the research and have fully understood it. I have talked it over with the researcher to my satisfaction. I understand that my participation is voluntary. I know enough about the purpose, methods, risk and benefits of the research study to judge that I want to take part in it. I understand that I may freely stop being part of this study at any time. I have received a copy of this consent form and additional information sheet to keep for myself.

DATE _____/_____/_____

SIGNATURE/THUMB PRINT _____

NAME _____

Detailed contact information

The research has been approved by the Oyo state Ministry of Health, Research Ethical Review Committee. If you have any question about your participation, you can contact the principal investigator, Olaniran Olosunbo Constance, Department of Health Promotion and Education, College of Medicine, University of Ibadan. The telephone number is 07036355112 and email: colasunbo@yahoo.com. You can also contact the supervisor of this project Dr. Oyedunni S. Arulogun through the telephone number 08035794630 at the Department of Health Promotion and Education, College of Medicine, University College Hospital, Ibadan.

APPENDIX IV

TELEGRAMS.....

TELEPHONE.....



MINISTRY OF HEALTH

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, RESEARCH & STATISTICS DIVISION
PRIVATE MAIL BAG NO. 5027, OYO STATE OF NIGERIA

Your Ref. No.
All communications should be submitted to
the Honourable Commissioner of Health
Our Ref. No. AD 13/ 479/ 64

12th May, 2014

The Principal Investigator
Department of Health Promotion And Education
College of Medicine
University of Ibadan,
Ibadan.

Attention: Olufemi Oluwalanle, Esq.

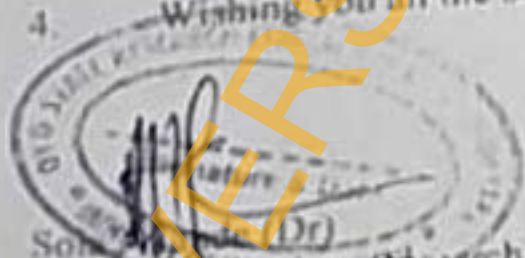
Ethical Approval for the Implementation of your Research Proposal in Oyo State

This acknowledges the receipt of the corrected version of your Research Proposal titled
"Perception, Attitudes and Practice of Pre-marital Cohabitation among students of the
Polytechnic Ibadan, Oyo State."

2. The committee has noted your compliance with all the ethical concerns raised in
the initial review of the proposal. In the light of this, I am pleased to convey to you the
approval of committee for the implementation of the Research Proposal in Oyo State,
Nigeria.

3. Please note that the committee will monitor closely and follow up the
implementation of the research study. However, the Ministry of Health would like to
have a copy of the results and conclusions of the findings as this will help in policy
making in the health sector.

4. Wishing you all the best.



Solomon Oluwalanle (Dr)
Director, Planning, Research & Statistics
Secretary, Oyo State, Research Ethical Review Committee