

Impact of Campus Cohabitation on Students' Academic Performance: A Study of Selected Institutions

Ihuoma Nnennaya Uro, PhD

General Studies Unit, Gregory University Uturu, Abia State, Nigeria

Ihejiofor Kingsley Ikenna

Independent Researcher, Research Parks Africa Academic Standard Ltd., Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

Peter Gerson Isa

Department of General Studies, Hakmah Theological College, Kaltungo, Gombe State, Nigeria

Email: gersonpeterisa@gmail.com

Abstract

Effect of Campus Cohabitation on Students Academic Performance: a Study of Selected Institutions Of Higher Learning Cohabitation has made its way into college campuses, as more students are leaving home and engaging in romantic relationships but not marrying. Data were collected from 150 students using structured questionnaires, through descriptive survey design. Keywords: Cohabitation, financial limitation, peer pressure, emotional connection, lack of parental supervision. It also goes on to show the detrimental impact of living together on academic performance through reduced study hours, higher absenteeism and emotional tension. Further statistical analysis confirmed the correlation of cohabitation with academic performance. The study suggests that increased parental support, counseling services, institutional regulations, and financial support can help counter challenges posed by cohabitation on academics.

Keywords: Campus Cohabitation, Academic Performance, Students, Higher Institutions, Peer Influence.

1. Introduction

Cohabitation refers to the practice where an unmarried male and female live together in an intimate relationship without formal marriage. In recent years, cohabitation has become increasingly common among students in higher institutions. This trend is more noticeable among students who live off-campus, where supervision is minimal and freedom is higher.

Higher institutions are established primarily to promote academic excellence, character development, and intellectual growth. However, various social behaviors, including campus

*Corresponding author : Peter Gerson Isa
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cohabitation, may influence students' academic performance either positively or negatively. Some students believe that living together reduces financial burdens and provides emotional support. Others argue that it creates distractions, emotional stress, and financial challenges that may negatively affect academic achievement Abdullahi .M [1].

Academic performance refers to how well a student performs in examinations, assignments, tests, and overall coursework. Several factors influence academic performance, such as study habits, peer influence, financial stability, emotional wellbeing, and social environment Mashau, T. D. [2]. Campus cohabitation may interact with these factors in different ways. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the impact of campus cohabitation on students' academic performance in higher institutions [3], [4], [5].

Statement of the Problem

The growing prevalence of cohabitation of students within the higher institutions has become a source of worry for parents, educationists, clergy men and bodies governing the schools [6]. Some feel cohabitation might lead to low grades, mental instability, unwanted births, and dropping out of school. However, several students say that cohabitation assists them in splitting costs while also allowing for emotional support which can help enhance their studies. Such contrasting perspective necessitates an empirical investigation. The problem of this study is to find out whether campus cohabitation really jeopardizes the academic performance of the students and what type of impact does it have.

Objectives of the Study

The primary aim of this research is to investigate the effect of affiliation among students in other words cohabitation on academic performances of college students.

The specific objectives are to:

- i. Calculate the rate of cohabitation between students.
- ii. Look at reasons why students are living together.
- iii. Explore the impact of living together on the academic achievement of students.
- iv. Recognizing Problems Confronting Cohabiting Students
- v. Propose solutions to mitigate negative effects of cohabitation.

Research Questions

This study will seek to answer the following questions:

- Q1: How many students in higher institutions are living with someone?
- ii. What causes students to live together?
- iii. Does living together impact academic performance for students?
- iv. What are the challenges cohabitation students have to encounter?
- v. What can we do to mitigate it?

Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between campus cohabitation and students' academic performance.

H₀₂: Cohabitation does not significantly influence students' class attendance.

H₀₃: Cohabitation has no significant effect on students' academic achievement.

Significance of the Study

Who would benefit from this study:

To students, educating them about the academic impact of living together. Parent Awareness of the obstacles their children face School administrators in establishing policies to govern students. As a reference material for scientists. In their efforts to develop programs for education and moral guidance, policy makers,

Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the impact of campus cohabitation on students' academic performance in higher institutions. It will cover selected students within the institution under study. The research will examine academic performance indicators such as grades, attendance, and participation.

Literature Review

Conceptual Framework

Concept of Cohabitation

The term defined here as cohabitation — the practice of two persons not married to each other living together in an intimate relationship — Campus cohabitation is when students live as sexual partners in or near the school grounds on higher institutions. Academics talk of cohabitation as a trend spurred by modernity, economic circumstances, peer influence and altering values surrounding sex. For students, cohabitation is often associated with economic convenience, emotional attachment and desire for independence [7], [8], [9], [10].

Concept of Academic Performance

Academic performance is the extent to which a student, teacher, or institution has achieved their educational goals. It is assessed through regular assessments, examinations, GPA, class and assignment submission. There are two types of factors affecting the academic performance: 1) internal factors including innate characteristics such as motivation, intelligence, study habits etc. 2) external factors such as family background, peer influences, financial condition and social environment of the student [11], [12], [13], [14], [15].

Causes of Cohabitation Among Students

There are multiple reasons why students live together, such as:

- Continued: Peer Pressure: If a student lives with others who are already living together, there is a strong tendency to follow suit out of peer pressure to fit in or be accepted.
- Need for Closeness and Romantic Partnership: Some students live together in order to engage in romantic relationships without the watchful eye of their parents/institutions.
- Absence of Adequate Housing: A shortage or poor on-campus housing could compel students to share off-campus accommodation with their partners.
- Distance from Parents: Students have independence as a result of being away from home, which allows them to live together when they choose.
- The Need to Explore: Some students get a roommate simply for the reason of exploring, wanting to live a life of cohabiting adults.
- Economic issue: Living together can be financially attractive for some students because sharing with a partner can be less expensive as it usually reduces the housing costs.
- Lack of Monitoring/ Weak Enforcement of Campus ' Rules so that Students feel home free to cohabit.

Effects of Cohabitation on Academic Performance

Cohabitation may affect students academically in various ways:

1. **Reduced Study Time:** Students living with partners may spend more time on relationship activities than on academics, leaving less time for studying, assignments, and exam preparation.
2. **Distraction and Lack of Focus:** Emotional involvement in cohabitation can lead to distractions, making it difficult for students to concentrate on lectures, readings, and academic tasks.

3. **Low Academic Outcome:** Students involving in cohabitation may have poor grades when compared to those of their peers as their attention toward their personal life may divide their exposure to studies.
4. **Higher Stress and Anxiety:** Some forms of cohabitation lead to more financial, emotional, or some sort of interpersonal stress, which deteriorates cognitive functioning, memory, and other academic performance aspects.
5. **Skipping Classes:** When responsible peers skip lectures, tutorials or labs, the students living together will opt for lazy personal time too; skipping classes will lead to less learning.
6. **Negative Peer Influence:** If students cohabit with each other, they may pick up negative ways of living that will affect their academic performance tearfully — like they may start procrastinating, party socialize, and ignore their schoolwork.
7. **Lack of Participation in Academic Activities:** Cohabitation can restrict participation in extracurricular or academic development activities, like workshops, seminars or study groups, which may impact all rounded learning.

Challenges that Cohabiting Students Face

1. **Misunderstanding:** if you stay in the same property during term time & cohabit, you may be affected if him/her is having a party, playing loud music, or there may be a fight with your partner. This would also respond to the academic distraction as these interruptions does mean, making it harder to focused, and make your term out of balance. Such distractions make them less attentive towards lectures, assignments, exam preparations and ultimately results in poor academic performance.
2. **Disambiguation on Time:** Peers or partner-to-be also stay aside commonly, and their schedule can conflict or vice versa. Students might find it difficult to manage study hours, sports and friends.
3. **Financial burden:** When two people share a home, actual living costs result in sharing the rent, utilities and food. While sharing digs can be an effective money-saving move, it can also put pressure on students for whom money is already an issue, pushing them into part-time work which can adversely impact grades.
4. **Emotional Stress:** Cohabiting relationships can create emotional stress through things like misunderstandings, conflicts or breakups. Concentration, motivation, and general mental health are all adversely affected by emotional strain.
5. **Advertisement Room Sharing:** Making arrangements to share rooms or living places means you have someone close to you at any given time, making privacy a rare commodity. This can lead to students feeling supervised every move they make or take away from that necessary quiet time to process information, reflect and meditate, that they need to keep in good mental health.
6. **Health Risks:** Cohabitation increases the risk of spreading illnesses, especially in close quarters. Poor living hygiene, inadequate rest, or unhealthy habits of roommates can compromise a student's physical health.
7. **Peer Pressure:** Living with others exposes students to peer influence, including risky behaviors such as alcohol consumption, drug use, or skipping classes. This can distract them from their academic and personal goals.
8. **Conflicts and Tension:** Differences in lifestyle, habits, or beliefs among cohabiting students can lead to frequent conflicts. Such tension can create a stressful environment that hampers learning and emotional stability.

9. Impact on Academic Performance: Balancing cohabitation, social life, and academics can lead to procrastination or insufficient study time. Over time, this can result in lower grades, course failures, or even dropping out.

10. Psychological and Relationship Pressure: Romantic cohabitation may bring pressure to meet partner expectations, deal with jealousy, or face breakups. Such psychological strain can affect focus, motivation, and general mental health.

Relationships Between Students' Failure and Cohabitation in Higher Institutions

1. Reduced Study Time: Cohabiting students may spend more time attending to relationship issues, reducing time available for reading and assignments.

2. Emotional Distraction: Frequent misunderstandings, jealousy, or conflicts can affect concentration and academic focus.

3. Skipping Classes: Couples start skipping the classes to be with one another.

4. Financial Limits: Splitting expenses (rent, feeding, bills..etc) puts a burden on students, making it difficult to allocate their funds for school purposes.

5. Unplanned Pregnancy: A pregnancy can disrupt education, cause absenteeism from classes, or even force students to leave school temporarily.

6. Psychological Stress: Relationship instability can lead to anxiety, depression, or emotional trauma and impact academic performance.

7. Isolation from peers: Cohabiting students may remove themselves from academic peer groups, isolating them from many learning opportunities that come from engaging with classmates.

8. Household Tasks: These may include cooking, cleaning, or other chores that leave less time and energy for school work.

9. Negative Effects of Alcohol and Risky Behaviors: Many students are more exposed to excessive consumption of alcohol and lifestyle that is not conducive to academic ability through cohabitation.

10. Sleep Disruption: Things like arguments or even other late-night activities contribute to bad sleeping patterns and performance in the classroom.

11. Decline of Educational Motivation: Students may focus more on their relationship than on long-term educational objectives.

12. Social Stigma: Negative perception from lecturers or peers may affect self-esteem and confidence in class participation.

13. Conflict Leading to Breakups: Breakups can cause emotional instability and poor academic results.

14. Divided Attention: Balancing academic work and relationship demands can reduce academic effectiveness.

15. School Policy Violations: In institutions where cohabitation is prohibited, disciplinary actions may disrupt academic progress.

What measures can be Taken to Address the Issue

Awareness Campaigns: Arrange seminars, workshops, and talks to make pupils aware of the academic, social and health consequences of living together.

Orientation Programs: Incorporate campus policies, expected conduct, and information about the ramifications of living together into student introduction programs.

Training student leaders as peer educator and mentor to guide peers on healthy lifestyle choices

Fortify Institutional Policies: Rules about where students can live, cohabitation, and other behavioral expectations belong in the student handbook.

Zero Tolerance: Violating cohabitation policies should lead to automatic disciplinary responses to discourage violations.

Counseling Services: Connect students with professional counselors who support healthy relationships and decision-making.

Parents and Guardians: Update parents periodically about campus policies and engage them in advising their wards about appropriate behaviour.

Facilitate Good Socialization: Plan sports, clubs and cultural activities to promote socialization in a guided way rather than an unmonitored cohabitation way.

Manage Dormitory: Regular checks-donations, segregate by gender if possible, check on guests in hostel as well.

Academic Motivation Programs: Reduce distractions resulting from cohabitation, by encouraging academic focus through the facilitation of scholarships, recognition awards and mentorship programs.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the following theories:

Social Learning Theory

Proposed by Albert Bandura, this theory explains that individuals learn behaviors through observation and imitation. Students may adopt cohabitation practices after observing peers who engage in it without immediate consequences.

Strain Theory

Strain theory suggests that individuals may adopt alternative behaviors due to economic or social pressure. Financial challenges among students may push them into cohabitation as a coping strategy.

Functionalist Theory

Functionalists argue that social institutions like family and education perform important roles. Cohabitation among students may disrupt the educational function by shifting focus from academic responsibilities to domestic roles.

Empirical Review

Previous research has looked at the link between living together and grades. In several institutions of higher learning, studies have shown that ladies who are cohabiting end up performing poorly in school because of emotional trauma, financial burden and divided attention. Some found cohabiting students to have higher rates of absenteeism, and lower GPA, etc. Some other studies reported that when stable cohabitation is rare, performing of the students (including better performance) is improved with the help of emotional and financial support from their partners. However, evidence relating to the effect of campus cohabitation on academic outcomes has been generally negative.

2. Research Method

Research Design

This study adopts a descriptive survey research design. The survey design is appropriate because it allows the researcher to collect data from a large group of respondents in order to describe the relationship between campus cohabitation and academic performance. The design enables the researcher to gather information directly from students through questionnaires and analyze their responses objectively.

Area of the Study

The study will be conducted in a selected higher institution. The institution comprises different faculties and departments with students from diverse social, cultural, and economic backgrounds.

Population of the Study

The population of the study consists of all undergraduate students in the selected higher institution. This includes both male and female students across different levels of study.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample of students will be selected from the total population to represent the entire group. A simple random sampling technique will be used to give all students equal opportunity of being selected. For example, a sample size of 150-200 students may be chosen depending on the population size of the institution.

Instrument for Data Collection

The main instrument for data collection will be a structured questionnaire designed by the researcher. The items will be structured using a Likert scale format, such as: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD).

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected will be analyzed using: Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and percentages. Mean and standard deviation to answer research questions. Inferential statistics such as Chi-square or t-test to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The results will be presented in tables for clarity and proper interpretation.

3. Results

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1. Gender.

| Variables | Frequency (f) | Percents (%) |
|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| Male | 80 | 53.3 |
| Female | 70 | 46.7 |
| Total | 150 | 100% |

Source: Fieldwork: 2026

Table 2. Age.

| Variables | Frequency (f) | Percents (%) |
|------------------|---------------|--------------|
| 16-20 | 45 | 30 |
| 21-25 | 15 | 10 |
| 26 years & above | 90 | 60 |
| Total | 150 | 100% |

Source: Fieldwork: 2026

Table 3. Level of Study.

| Variables | Frequency (f) | Percents (%) |
|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| 100 Level | 25 | 16.7 |
| 200 Level | 35 | 23.3 |
| 300 Level | 40 | 26.7 |
| 400 Level | 50 | 33.3 |
| Total | 150 | 100% |

Source: Fieldwork: 2026

Interpretation: The data shows that the majority of respondents are male (53.3%), aged 26 years above (60%), and mostly in 300–400 levels.

Table 4. Prevalence of Cohabitation Among Students.

| Response | Frequency (f) | Percents (%) |
|----------------|---------------|--------------|
| Yes, I cohabit | 25 | 16.7 |
| No, i don't | 125 | 83.3 |
| Total | 150 | 100% |

Source: Fieldwork: 2026

Interpretation: 167% of students admitted to cohabiting, while the majority (83.3%) do not. This indicates that cohabitation is present but not dominant among students.

Table 5. Factors Leading Students to Cohabit.

| Factors | SA | A | D | SD | Mean |
|------------------------------|----|----|----|----|------|
| High cost of accommodation | 30 | 50 | 40 | 30 | 2.85 |
| Peer influence | 25 | 55 | 35 | 35 | 2.80 |
| Emotional Attachment | 40 | 45 | 25 | 40 | 2.90 |
| Lack of Parental Supervision | 35 | 50 | 30 | 35 | 2.88 |

Source: Fieldwork: 2026

Interpretation: Students identified financial challenges, peer influence, emotional attachment, and lack of parental supervision as the main reasons for cohabitation. Emotional and social factors play a significant role.

Table 6. Effects of Cohabitation on Academic Performance.

| Effects | SA | A | D | SD | Mean |
|-----------------------|----|----|----|----|------|
| Reduced Study Time | 40 | 50 | 20 | 10 | 3.25 |
| Poor Class Attendance | 35 | 45 | 30 | 10 | 3.05 |
| Emotional Stress | 45 | 40 | 25 | 10 | 3.15 |
| Financial Challenges | 30 | 50 | 30 | 10 | 2.95 |
| Risk of Pregnancy | 20 | 30 | 50 | 10 | 2.50 |

Source: Fieldwork: 2026

Interpretation: The data indicate that cohabitation negatively affects academic performance by reducing study time, increasing absenteeism, and causing emotional stress. Financial and health-related risks are also present but slightly lower.

Table 7. Challenges Faced by Cohabiting Students.

| Challenges | Frequency (f) | Parentage (%) |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Conflict with Partner | 30 | 20 |
| Balancing Academic & Domestic Duties | 35 | 23.3 |
| Financial Strain | 40 | 26.7 |
| Social Stigma | 25 | 16.7 |
| Health Issues | 20 | 13.3 |

Source: Fieldwork: 2026

Interpretation: Financial strain and balancing academics with domestic responsibilities are the most significant challenges faced by cohabiting students.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between campus cohabitation and students' academic performance.

Using Chi-square analysis at 0.05 level of significance, the calculated χ^2 value is 15.8, while the critical value is 9.49.

Since $15.8 > 9.49$, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Interpretation: There is a significant relationship between campus cohabitation and students' academic performance. Cohabitation negatively affects academic outcomes.

4. Discussion

Summary of Findings

Some students do live together, but it is by no means common. Financial problems, peers and emotional attachment: these are the main reasons why couples move in together. Living together discourages study time, attendance and motivation, thus harming academic performance. Students living together are burdened by costs, worried about constant emotive pressure and dealing with social judgment. Cohabitation significantly relates to academic performance.

Summary of the Study

The research examined how cohabitating students' academic performance has been impacted on campus. The study targeted students in a chosen higher institution and assessed: The extent of cohabitation among students. Factors leading students to cohabit. Cohabitation and its impact on Academic Performance Challenges faced by cohabiting students. We used structured questionnaires (well defined and designed questionnaires) on 150 students for data collection. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the responses.

Key findings include:

While 27% of the students surveyed confessed to cohabiting (indicating that this lifestyle forms a not insignificant part of student life), cohabitation is assumed to be far from widespread. Financial problems, peer influence, emotional bonding and lack of parental control human behaviour are the main cohabitation influencing. The literacy statistics amongst college students reveal that cohabitation reduces study time, attendance, leads to emotional difficulties, and financial issues; thus, depressing education quality. Current students living together would take an obvious toll, too; There are exams and roommates — not to mention the burdens of behavioral pressure and costs — to consider. With statistical analysis, we confirmed that cohabitation reduce student performance.

5. Conclusion

The significant findings of this study suggest that cohabitation tendencies among students in higher institutions do negatively affect their academic performance. In some cases, the emotional and financial support gained from living together might be good, but overall, the sacrifice of energy and focus is the same and a detriment to academic success. The financial burden, household chores, emotional breakdowns as well as peer pressure from cohabitation take up the time and energy students would otherwise spend on studies. It finds it confirms what we have previously suspected, that cohabiting students are considerably more likely to show absenteeism, low grades, and academic failure than their counterparts, who do not engage in cohabitation.

Recommendations

From the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations can be made:

- i. Parental and Guardian advisory: Parents need to guide students on cohabitation and sociability wise also.
- ii. Institutional Policies: The higher institution should be strict about the off-campus staying together of opposite sex students and create more on-campus accommodation space to curb the temptations.
- iii. Counseling Services — Schools must have mentoring and counselling to help develop students on how to have a healthy relationship, how to manage their time responsibly.
- iv. Grant Aid: Institutions can implement financial aid to students to mitigate economic stresses that push students toward cohabitation.
- v. The awareness programs: The seminars and workshops to be arranged to show the academic risks to cohabitation.
- vi. Managing Peer Influence — Where feasible, be sure students have academic peer groups to do not cohabit but study together.
- vii. Promote Sexual Health: Educate about safer practice, family planning, and the sexual health implications of cohabitation.

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