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## SPATIAL VARIATION ASSESSMENT OF COHABITATION IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA

<sup>1</sup> EJEH BENEDICT., <sup>2</sup>NDOMA. E.E., <sup>3</sup>BELLO, A.O (MRS) <sup>4</sup>BULAMA LAWAN

<sup>1,4</sup> Department of Geography, Federal University Gashua, Yobe State, Nigeria.

<sup>2</sup> Department of Geography, Federal University Kashere, Gombe State, Nigeria.

<sup>3</sup> Geography Department, Federal College of Education, Zaria, Kaduna State, Nigeria.

\*Corresponding Author's Email: [findbenejehnear82@gmail.com](mailto:findbenejehnear82@gmail.com) 07058341714

### Abstract

*There is a rising incidence of cohabitation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and this cut across over space which is being influenced by various factors. The study reports the incidence of cohabitation in some selected Local Government Area of Benue State. Data for this study was obtained through questionnaire. Purposive sampling method was used to select six Local Government Areas, while 386 households were chosen as sample size. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentages, map were adopted for the analysis. Result from the findings indicates that 85% of the respondents reported to have knowledge of the incidence of cohabitation. About 91% perceived the rate of cohabitation as very noticeable while 9% perceived it less and not noticeable. This reaffirms the fact that the rate of cohabitation is a common reality in the study area. The spatial variation revealed that, cohabitation is more in Otukpo (3.00) and less in Tarka (2.35) Local Government Areas. It is established that marital compatibility and sexual satisfaction are the most contributory factors influencing the rising incidence of cohabitation with equal value (4.20) and financial challenges which are rated higher than other factors by the respondents. Based on the findings, it is therefore recommended that Faith-based organizations (churches/mosques), non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations, traditional, media institutions should carry out public enlightenment to sensitize people on the implications of cohabitation on people involved, the Government of Benue State through the Ministry of information should sensitize the public on the appropriate way of choosing a marriage partner instead of trial and error method.*

**Key words:** Spatial variation, Knowledge and Cohabitation

### 1. Introduction

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century has witnessed unprecedented changes in family demographics. Some phenomenon that borders on sexuality which is regarded as taboos or vices have been enthroned as virtues to be pursued or celebrated by in different parts of the world including Nigeria in general and Benue State in particular. For instance, the marriage pattern in Benue State before year 2000 was such a way that a man must be up to 25 years and has

the financial and physical capability to maintain a wife and children while the girl must be 18 years (Abraham, 1951 and Aboje, 2015). Ideally, such a girl is expected to be a virgin, as it is a source of pride and joy to her family. If found deflowered/disvirgined, she will be taken to the husband's family' ancestral shrine for cleansing. After cleansing, the Ije (*an ancestral sash*) is put on her to invoke fertility. As a result of these conditions, the rate



of pre-marital sex that could lead to cohabitation was minimal (Abraham, 1951 and Aboje, 2015).

Cohabitation is an arrangement where two people that are not married, live together in a romantic relationship and or sexually intimate relationship on a long term or permanent basis (Ojewola and Akinduyo, 2017).. The incidence of cohabitation has become one of the transformations the family is experiencing in recent times. Available evidence shows that cohabitation has been on the increase in both developed and developing countries of the world. Kiernan (2002) documented that between 75% to 90% of people in western countries cohabite before marriage. This varies across countries ranging from 30% in Sweden, 24% in New Zealand, 18% in Canada, 17% in France, 15% in United Kingdom, 7% in United State while Italy (4%) and Spain (3%) have the least occurrence (Popeone, 2008). Kuperge (2014) reported that, between 1985-2009 in United States over 66% of new marriages happen between cohabiting couple while 70% of women aged 30-34 years have cohabited while in Russia couple often times cohabit before marriage can take place (Isupova, 2015).

In sub-Saharan Africa, Mokomane (2006) reported about 80% of cohabitation in central Africa republic, 70% in Mozambique, 61% in Gabon with Niger and Senegal having the least of 0.1% and 0.3% respectively while Ndugurwal et al (2018) reported about 22% prevalence of cohabitation in Central Africa, 12% in Eastern Africa, 10% in Southern Africa, 7% in western Africa. In Nigeria, there is paucity of data on the incidence of cohabitation, however Ariyo (2013) discloses about 55.2% cohabitation rate in Lagos before marriage while 66% of students living outside four public universities campuses in two south western States of Lagos and Ibadan are cohabiters. Arisukwu (2013) and Akanbi (2015) reports that 79% of university

undergraduate students in Nigeria are aware of the practice of cohabitation which might also suggest general acceptance of this living style. Duyilemi, Tunde-Awe, and Adekola-Lois (2018) reports that cohabitation is now a culture in most of Nigerian tertiary institutions, particularly, institutions where on-campus accommodation is almost non-existent. Benue State with unique cultural and traditional heritage has continued to experience an increase in the incidence of cohabitation in recent times. Parents whose children cohabit are perceived as having failed in their duty to inculcate into the children the moral values of chastity, self-restraint and shame. For this reason, parents apply various strategies to keep their children from cohabitation due it effects on the female partner with less effect on the male counterpart (Ejeh, 2021).

Despite the different measure put in place to check mate the incidence of cohabitation, the rate continue to rise in Benue state. Cohabitation poses a challenge to cultural outlook towards marriage and it growing incidence has become a source of concern to parents, religious leaders, demographers and policy makers. People's perception on the rising incidence of cohabitation is of paramount importance so that policy makers could develop policies and strategies which can gain public confidence and support hence the need for this paper. The study examined the level of knowledge, perception, spatial variation and factors influencing the incidence of cohabitation in Benue State. The spatial scope covered some selected Local Government Areas and they include: Gboko, Kwande, Logo, Ohimini, Otukpo and Tarka. The content scope includes the level of knowledge, spatial pattern and factors influencing delayed marriage in the study. The temporal scope covered a period of nineteen (19) years, 2000-2019. This period was chosen based on the fact that, the changes in the family which include marriage pattern became more pronounced in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

## 2. Self-determination theory

Self-determination theory was developed by Deci and Ryan in 2000. The theory according to Knee, Hadden, Porter and Rodriguez, (2013) tries to explain choices and behaviours that are consistent with people's intrinsic needs which according to Garn, Matthews and Jolly, (2010), are the need to regulate their own behaviour, the need to interact effectively with the environment, as well as the need to feel a reciprocal connection with others and later Soenens and Vansteenkiste, (2010) added the need to engage in activities that will provide challenge and satisfaction. This theory provides a guideline on how human beings develop motivation to meet their needs.

The theory is based on the assumption that individuals have certain intrinsic needs which they seek to fulfill in order to achieve an optimum level of wellbeing. Gottlieb and Sevigny, (2016) assert that, human beings strive to meet these needs throughout their lives by selectively engaging in activities that would support the fulfillment of those needs. Hughes, (2015) opined that, rather than relying on prescribed social norms, individuals have inherent choices on how to construct their lives and identities. The self-determination theory according to Knee, Hadden, Porter and Rodriguez (2013) endorses individuals' full involvement in the relationship rather than feeling coerced, guilty, or not knowing the reason for being in the relationship such as cohabitation. Furthermore, self-determination theorists purport that individuals have moved away from traditional norms and expectations when it comes to romantic relationships. People therefore enter into a romantic relationship for its own sake without any obligation (Smith, 2014).

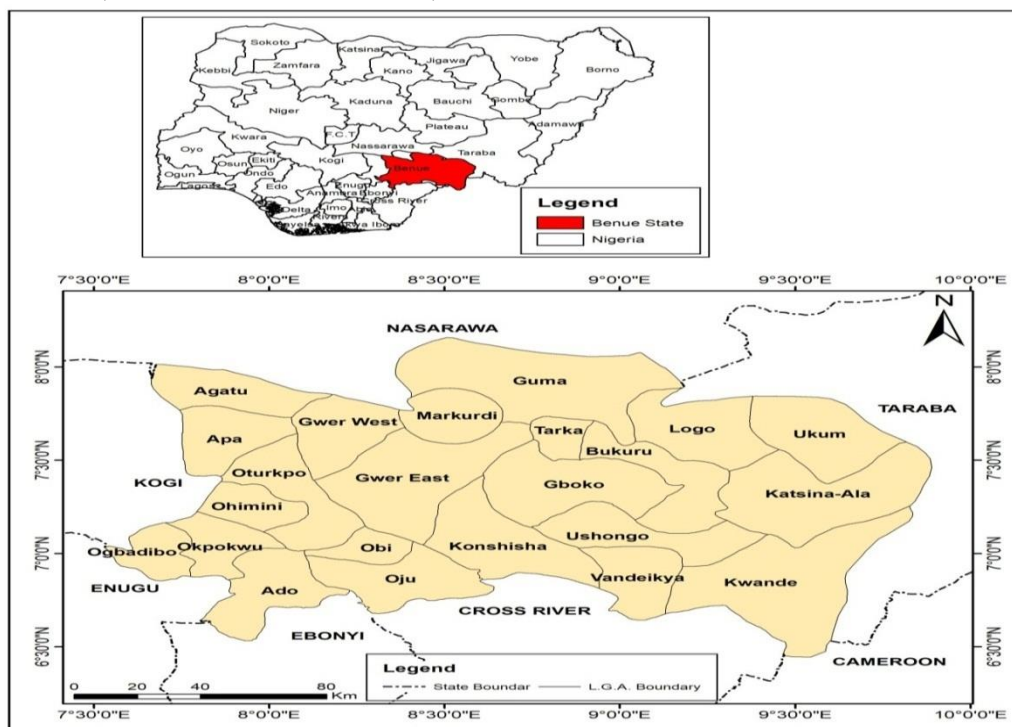
However, such autonomous behaviour is likely to thrive only in social contexts that are supportive and accommodative (Koehn, Gallison, Standage and Bailey 2016). The theory also addresses the situational factors that facilitate maximum self-fulfillment. A conducive social context may facilitate the fulfillment of the individuals' intrinsic needs, whilst a hostile one may hinder such an accomplishment and thus lead to passive engagement in behaviour (Koehn et al 2016). The theory was criticized by Knee et al., (2013) that not all individuals' choices are self-regulated or emanates from within a person which Seiffge-Krenke, (2013) put that, individuals' behaviour may be motivated by autonomous intentions; however, such individuals are still likely to experience and accede to pressure to satisfy internal or external expectations.

The self-determination theory offers explanations on how cohabiters' continued evaluation of marriage despite their increasingly less traditional attitudes towards romantic relationships (Hughes, 2015). Internally, cohabiters may be more disappointed in themselves for remaining in cohabitation against the traditional norms that they have internalized as their own (Soenens and Vansteenkiste, 2010). This dilemma may be detrimental to cohabitation considering the fact that young women have been socialized to aspire to marriage, which some communities still regard as the highest status for a woman. Residents of urban areas are more likely to cohabit for various reasons such as the need to share financial costs or raise their children together. The theory is relevance to the study because; it was used to explain the reasons why some people get involved in cohabitation despite the public condemnation by the society in general and Benue State in particular.

### 3. Study Area

Benue State is located between Latitudes  $6^{\circ} 30'$  -  $8^{\circ} 0' 0''$  North of the Equator and Longitudes  $7^{\circ} 30'$  -  $10^{\circ} 0'$  East of the Greenwich meridian (Figures 1). Benue State shares boundaries with other States like Nassarawa to the north, Taraba to the east, Cross-River to the south,

Enugu to the south-west and Kogi to the west. The State also shares a common boundary with the Republic of Cameroun on the south-east with a landmass of 32,518 square kilometer (Alhassan and Ujoh, 2014).



**Figure 1: Benue State**

**Source:** Adapted from Administrative Map of Nigeria (2019).

Benue State has a total population of 6, 427, 991 as projected in 2019 making it the 7th most populous State in Nigeria having about 51%

and 49% population of males and females (NPC, 2006).

### 4. Methodology

A multi-stage sampling technique was used for the study. In the first stage, the LGAs in the state were clustered into the three senatorial zones of Benue East, North and South. In the second stage, systematic sampling technique was used to select the LGAs from the three senatorial zones of the State. The LGAs in each senatorial zone were arranged in

alphabetical order. Two LGAs were selected; one with the highest and lowest estimated households was purposively selected to enhance equal representation from each zone. These include Gboko, Kwande, Logo, Ohimini, Oturkpo and Tarka. The selected LGAs and their 20006 population figures are given in Table 1.



**Table 1: Selected LGAs and sample size**

Zones	2006 Pop	Projected Pop. 2019	Estimated households	No. of Respondents
<b>Benue North-East</b>				
Kwande	248, 642	397, 031	60, 005	80
Logo	169, 570	270, 768	45, 128	55
<b>Benue North-West</b>				
Gkoko	361, 325	576, 962	96, 160	117
Tarka	79, 280	121, 803	20, 301	25
<b>Benue South</b>				
Ohimini	70, 288	112, 874	18, 264	23
Otukpo	266, 411	425, 404	70, 901	86
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,195, 516</b>	<b>1,904, 842</b>	<b>310, 759</b>	<b>386</b>

**Source: Field Survey, 2019**

In the third stage, systematic sampling technique was used to select wards from the six selected LGAs. For proper representation of the six (6) selected LGAs, the wards in each of the LGAs were arranged in alphabetical order and every second, fourth ward in that order were selected. The fourth stage involved the

use of Nigeria average house size of six (6) persons per household divide by the projected population in each of the Local Government Areas (LGAs). This gave a total of 310, 759 households in the selected LGAs which was used as the study population.

In the fifth stage, household at ward level in each of the selected LGAs served as a unit of observation. Convenience sampling method was used to select a household in each of the selected wards for questionnaire administration. The head of each household was chosen as the respondent and where he/she

is not available; the eldest adult person was selected to represent the household. This was done until the required sample size was obtained. One copy of questionnaire was administered per household to allow full participation of other households especially in urban areas where there are multiple tenants.

## 5. Data Analysis

The data obtained from the questionnaire were coded manually and entered into and analyzed using SPSS version 21. Simple descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, tables and map were used for

the analysis. On the spatial variation, mean score was used which can be expressed as:

$$\text{Mean score} = \frac{\sum fx}{\sum f}$$

Where:  $\sum fx$  = The total value of likert,  $\sum f$  = The total frequency. Thereafter, weighted mean was used to rate the mean score which can be expressed as:

$$\text{Weighted mean} = \frac{\text{The total number of likert} - 1}{\text{The number of likert}} = \frac{3+2+1-1}{3} = 1.66$$

Therefore, a mean score value ranging from 1.00-1.66 can be interpreted as low, 1.67-2.33 can be regarded as moderate

while a value ranging from 2.34-3.00 can be referred to as high.

Mean score	Interpretation
1.00-1.66	Low
1.67-2.33	Moderate
2.34-3.00	High

Source: Adapted from Wierma, 2000

## 6. Results and Discussion

### 6.1 Demographic and socio-economic characteristics of respondents

The sex distribution of respondents is presented in Figure 2. Results show that about 62% of the household heads were males while

38% were females. This is in tandem with the fact that, the households in Benue State like other traditional African societies are male-headed dominated. This is in consonance with Osezua 2009 and Andrew, Chia and Okeme 2018 which reported 78% and 69% dominated by male-heads.

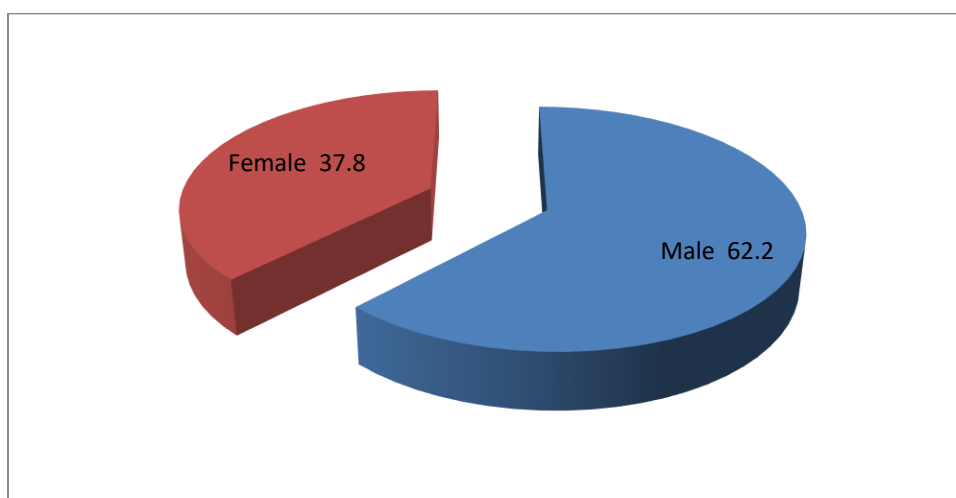


Figure 2 Sex of Respondents

Source: Field Survey, 2019

However, the findings disagree with Manyara (2016) on changing family structure where the composition of females outnumbered that of male in Kenya. The difference could be attributed to the location which is made of people with different socio-economic characteristics from the present study areas.

The age distribution of respondents in Table 2 indicates the dominance of 50 years and above which accounts for 81%. Only few were

between the age brackets of 35-39. The finding established that most household heads in the selected Local Government were adults. Among them, about 38% were aged (age 60 and above). The findings corroborate with that of Attah, Mbah and Okeke (2018) where it was reported that, the majority of the household heads in Benue State were within the age bracket 50 years and above. The marital status of reveals that majority of the respondents (62%) were married. Others include widow

(10.6%), divorce (12.7%) and separated (6.7%).

**Table 2 Age, Marital status, occupation and monthly incomes of respondents**

Age	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Age group (years)</b>		
35-39	9	2.3
40-44	22	5.7
45-49	41	10.6
50-54	101	26.2
55-59	65	16.8
60-64	71	18.4
65 and above	77	20.0
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	33	8.5
Married	237	61.5
Widow	35	10.6
Widower	6	1.6
Divorce	49	12.7
Separated	26	6.7
<b>Religion</b>		
Islam	12	3.1
Christianity	368	95.3
Traditional	6	1.6
<b>Occupation</b>		
Civil service	88	22.8
Farming	212	54.9
Pettytrading/business	62	16.0
Artisan	10	2.6
Student	8	2.1
Housewife	6	1.6
<b>Monthly income</b>		
No fixed income	131	33.9
₦5000- ₦10,000	42	10.9
₦10,000- ₦15,000	37	9.6
₦15,000- ₦20,000	45	11.7
₦20,000- ₦25,000	22	5.7
₦25,000- ₦30,000	6	1.6
₦30,000- ₦35,000	13	3.4
₦35,000- ₦40,000	26	6.7
₦40,000 and above	64	16.6

**Source: Field Survey**



The finding is in tandem with studies in Benue State by Osezua (2009); Okeke, Ihenacho and Obasi (2015); Upev, Haruna and Giroh (2016) where 77.5% 69.2% 82.5% of the respondents were married accordingly.

The religion of respondents is reveals that 95% of respondents practice Christianity with only 5% being traditional and Muslims. The reason for high population of Christians is due to their dominance in the State. In confirmation of the findings, Ejeh (2016) and Otanwa (2017) in their study reported Christian religion as the dominant religion with few Muslim and traditional worshippers in Benue State. Result of occupation of the respondents reveals that 55% were farmers who depend mainly on farming as means of livelihood. Others are 23% in civil service, 16% are petty traders, 3% are artisan, 4% are students and housewife respectively. This is in consonance with the study by Ejeh (2016) and Aboajah *et al* (2018) where 55% and 97% of the respondents were farmers.

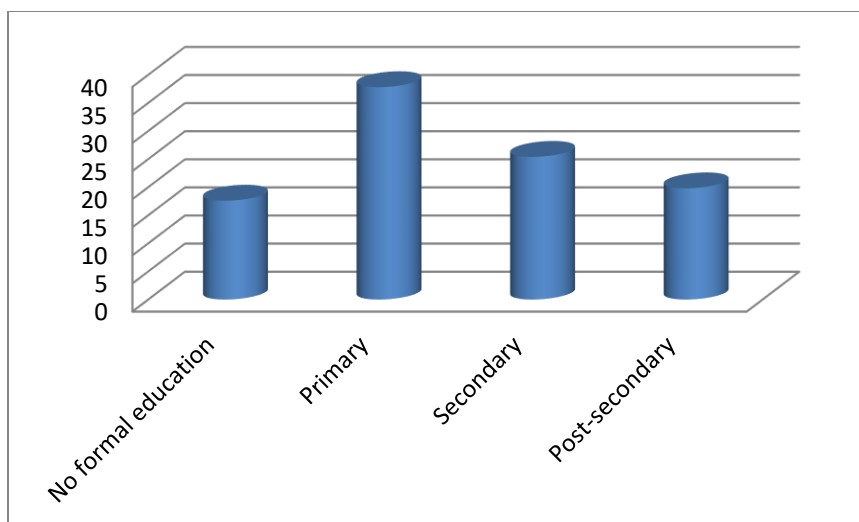
The income distribution of respondents reveals that 34% have no fixed income. This could be the nature of occupation engage in. About 32% earned monthly income between ₦5,000-₦20,000. Only about 28.2% of the respondents

earned monthly income above the national minimum wage of N30,000 (thirty thousand Naira) as obtainable in Nigeria. This suggests that most of the sampled population were low-income earners, which is very much related to the kind of socio-economic activities engaged in. Secondly, it could be attributed to the high number of respondents with primary education as highest qualification which can influence their opportunities to be gainfully employed in high income jobs. The level of income an individual earns could greatly influence his or her wellbeing such as quality of medical care, education and so on. The employment or occupational status of both men and women could influence family structure. Those who work outside the home especially in the urban area have higher tendencies of experiencing some form of family change such as marital separation which can be detrimental to the family wholeness. Most employed couple tend not to have enough time for marriage related cum family gender roles such as parental supervision, domestic chores among others and delegate these tasks to house helps. However, the study disagrees with Ogwuche and Asoba (2013) where majority of the household heads earn monthly income between 51-100,000 per month in Benue State.

## 6.2 Education of Respondents

Figure 3 indicates the level of education of respondents. Result shows that, majority

(82%) had formal education while about 18% had no formal education.

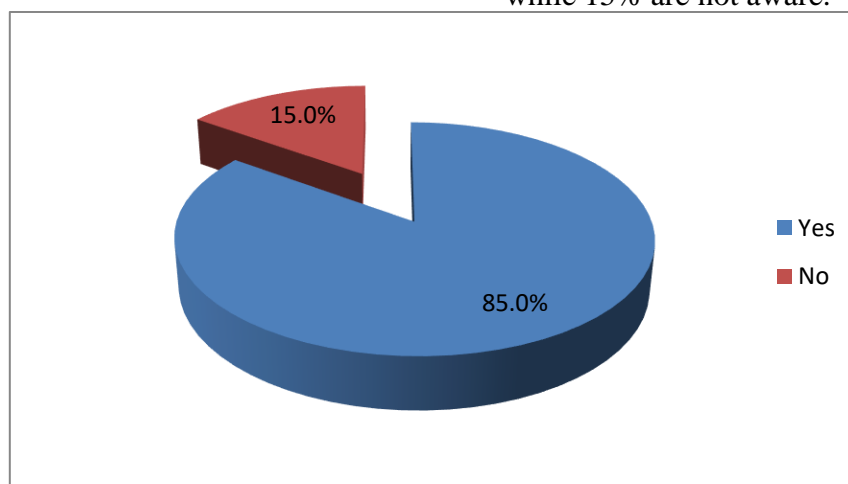


**Figure 3 Level of Education of Respondents**  
Source: Field Survey, 2019

Among those with formal education, primary education for about 38%. The low level of education especially the percentage of respondent with no formal education suggests that, they lack employment skills which could limit their potential to be gainfully employed.

#### 7. Level of knowledge of the rising incidence of cohabitation in the study area

The level of knowledge of the rising incidence of cohabitation is presented in Figure 4. Result indicates about 85% of the respondents are aware of the increasing rate of cohabitation while 15% are not aware.



**Figure 4: knowledge of cohabitation**  
Source: Field Survey, 2019

This is an indication that cohabitation is a common social phenomenon in the study area. According to National Bureau of Statistics 1999; 2005 and 2009, the rate of cohabitation in Benue State was 0.2% before the year 2000. This could be attributed to its total rejection in

the past. This has witnessed an increase of about 3.0% since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. This suggests that, from pre to post 2000 the rate of cohabitation has increased to about 2.8%. In support of the finding, William (2017) documented a gradual change in the

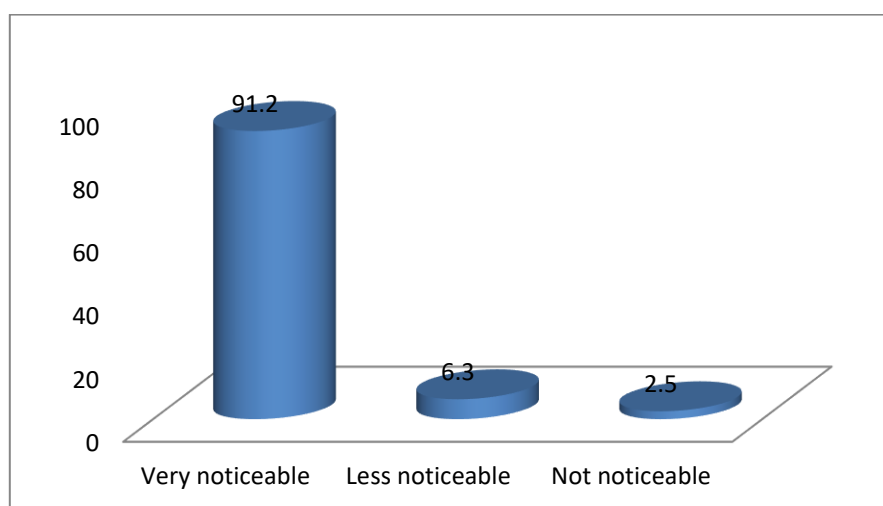
rate of cohabitation. It is an informal union and therefore not acceptable in many traditional societies. In other studies, Ogunsola (2011); Posel and Rudwick (2014) reported that, the socio-cultural norm of marriage in Africa use to progress from introduction and engagement

## 8. Perception of the incidence of cohabitation

Figure 5 shows the level of perception on the incidence of cohabitation in the study area. Respondents were asked to rate the incidence

and procreation in the past, but presently the sequence has changed; partners meet, fall in love, have sex, cohabit and marry or instead of marrying, they have children in cohabiting relationships.

of cohabitation based on their perception. Result reveals that, about 91% of respondents perceived cohabitation rising very noticeable while about 9% perceived it less and not noticeable



**Figure 5: Perception of cohabitation**  
**Source: Field Survey, 2019**

This is in tandem with, Ojewola and Akinduyo 2017 who both reported on the rising incidence of cohabitation in Bayelsa, Kwara and Ondo States respectively. In addition, William (2017) reported that before the 21<sup>st</sup> Century the rate of cohabitation was a rare living arrangement because of its total rejection by the society and the family compare to the present situation. Amos (2017) posited that, despite the family condemnation of cohabitation, the rate is still increasing. Mokomane (2006); Hatari (2009) and Uka (2015) added that cohabitation was a taboo in Africa including Nigeria where premium is placed on chastity and exchange of bride price before consummation of marital union. Despite this position, it appears the era of

premarital chastity is gradually fading away in many societies especially Benue State with an increment of 2.8% in about 21 years. In another view, Baloyi (2016) posited that cohabitation was regarded as traitors of tradition in Africa.

This suggests that cohabitation is condemn and frowned at by the society especially in Africa. Furthermore, Arisukwu (2013) stated that cohabitation is not limited to its prevalence but, also it is extended to its widespread and increasing social acceptance. Aremu et al (2019) stated that, increase in the number of cohabitation is particularly a visible change that has occurred in the family life in recent past. The implication of the finding is that, the increase in the incidence of cohabitation is

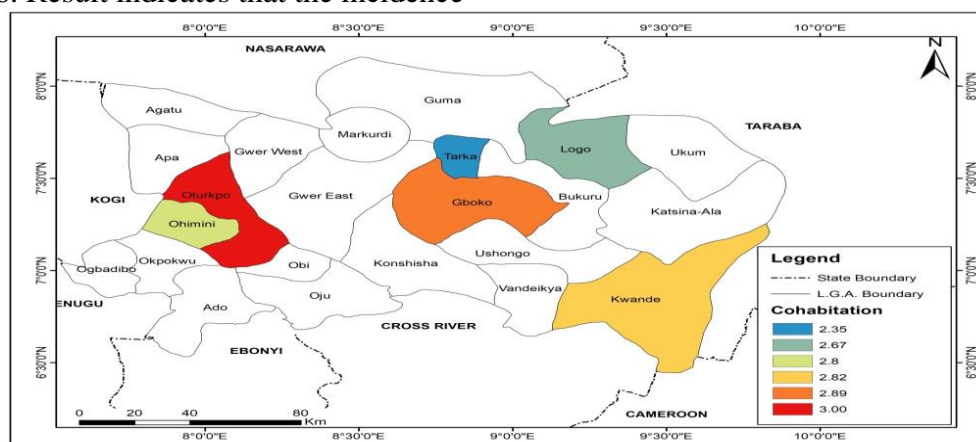
likely to have impact on the people involved such as high probability of school dropout, violence among others. Lee (2014) opined that cohabitation may negatively affect marital union and the persons involved. This is because cohabiting couple as reported by Attah (2012) and Mernitz (2018) are less likely to

spend time together and experience long term relationship. Cherlin (2004) posited that, cohabitation does not often lead to marriage. Furthermore, Ogunsola (2011) added that cohabitation that eventual leads to marriage have lower marital satisfaction, stability and experience relationship quality.

## 9. Spatial variation in Cohabitation

The spatial pattern of cohabitation is presented in Figure 6. Result indicates that the incidence

of cohabitation is common in Otukpo (3.00) and less in Tarka (2.35) than other LGAs.



**Figure 6. Spatial Distribution of cohabitation**  
Source: Field survey, 2019

This implies that, there are more people that are living together as husband and wife without registering their union formally in Otukpo and Gboko while such living arrangement is rare in Tarka, Logo than other LGAs. The high incidence of cohabitation in Otukpo and Gboko may be attributed to their locations being urban where people imbibe other traits from people owing to heterogeneity, individuality and anonymity in urban centres. In addition, Otukpo and Gboko have witnessed an increase in population growth of about 627,736-1002, 366 between

2006-2019 as projected and this could lead to shortage of accommodation and other reasons leading to cohabitation. According to Bumpass and Lu, (2000), the increase in the incidence of cohabitation could be due to the weakening of social norms related to marriage, which the author termed as deinstitutionalization of marriage. Ileoye (2018) added that the incidence of cohabitation has become rampant in the society which is more prominent in the urban areas and most institution of learning as a result of high cost of living, search for suitable partners among others.

## 10. Factors influencing cohabitation

Table 3 shows the distribution of respondents on the factors influencing the rising incidence of cohabitation. The result reveals that, compatibility, sexual satisfaction, financial

benefits were the main factors identified. Compatibility could be physical, emotional, intellectual and others. This is perceived as being very important to cohabiters before marriage can be contracted. In terms of compatibility, some people view living

together as a way to determine whether they can agree to a longer term marital commitment. This is supported by Adeniyi (2019) who documented that cohabitation gives the couple an opportunity to see how they would adjust to each other's habit and living pattern on a more intensive basis. Furthermore, living together before marriage also gives each party the option to end the relationship without the many legal complications involved in divorce.

On the financial benefits, some people cohabit with their partner to reduce the cost of living. According to them, they enjoy the financial support of their partner when they live together. Ogadimma (2013) reported that people from poor socio-economic background coupled with poor moral values are at risk of accepting free offer of accommodation on conditions of playing subservient roles.

**Table 3 Factors influencing the rate of Cohabitation**

Factors	Weighting/Response Frequency						Mean	Rank
	5	4	3	2	1	( $\Sigma f$ ) ( $\Sigma fx$ )		
Compatibility	223	106	21	23	13	386 1,661	4.30	1 <sup>st</sup>
Sexual satisfaction	204	127	30	16	9	386 1,659	4.30	1 <sup>st</sup>
Financial benefits	150	200	20	9	7	387 1,635	4.23	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Nearness to place of work/school	195	94	28	50	19	386 1,554	4.02	4 <sup>th</sup>
Poor parenting	131	136	78	21	20	386 1,495	3.87	5 <sup>th</sup>
Lack of accommodation	159	99	37	62	30	386 1,456	3.77	6 <sup>th</sup>
Peer influence	97	136	89	41	23	386 1,401	3.63	7 <sup>th</sup>
Fear of attack among people	111	91	39	80	65	386 1,261	3.27	8 <sup>th</sup>

**5=Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3=Undecided, 2=Disagree, 1= Strongly disagree**

**Source: Field Survey, 2019**

However, fear of attack among women does not account much for the reasons for cohabitation. This suggests that many people cohabit not necessary because of molestation but mostly for the purpose of compatibility and financial gains. The findings disagree with Jiya and Zhiri (2019) who stated peer pressure, lack of accommodation as the major causes of cohabitation but in tandem with Ojewola and Akinduyo (2017) which reveal financial challenge, desire for regular sex as the major factors influencing the rate of cohabitation. The reason for the contradiction and agreement could be attributed to location, sample size and technique.

The findings are linked to Self-determination Theory by Deci and Ryan who assumed that individuals have certain intrinsic needs which they seek to fulfill in order to achieve an

optimum level of wellbeing. Human beings strive to meet these needs throughout their lives by selectively engaging in activities that would support the fulfillment of those needs. Rather than relying on prescribed social norms, people have inherent choices on how to construct their lives and identities. The self-determination theory endorses individuals' full involvement in the relationship rather than feeling coerced, guilty, or not knowing the reason for being in the relationship such as cohabitation. This study established that individual faced with financial challenge, desiring for marital compatibility and sexual satisfaction are more likely to moved away from traditional norms when it comes to romantic relationships and this lead to their involvement in premarital cohabitation.

## 11. Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis was tested using chi-square to determine the significant relationship between the knowledge in the incidence of cohabitation among socio-economic and demographic subgroups. The result shows

that, the calculated chi-square is greater than the p-value between age  $X^2=12.767$ , religion  $X^2=5.385$ , Sex  $X^2=0.616$ , education,  $X^2=6.824$ , occupation  $X^2=16.097$  and income  $X^2=13.694$  and the knowledge of cohabitation.

**Table 4. Chi-square results on socio-demographic influence on cohabitation**

Variables	Indicator	Chi-square ( $X^2$ )	P-value	Remark
Age	Cohabitation	12.767	0.386	Not Significant
Religion	//	5.385	0.250	Significant
Sex	//	0.616	0.735	Not Significant
Education	//	6.824	0.556	Not Significant
Occupation	//	16.097	0.187	Not Significant
Income	//	13.694	0.622	Not Significant

**Source: Field survey, 2019**

We therefore reject the null hypothesis. This suggests that, there is no statistically significance relationship between age, religion, education, occupation and income and the knowledge of cohabitation while such relationship exists between sex and cohabitation.

## 12. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded, that the rising incidence of cohabitation is a public knowledge and this varies over space which is being influenced by factors such as marital compatibility and sexual satisfaction. This suggests that the traditional values are experiencing a transformation and the cultural chastity are no

longer promoted and encouraged in recent times. It is therefore recommended that: faith-based organizations (churches/mosques), non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations, traditional, media institutions should carry out public enlightenment on the implications of cohabitation on people involved, the Government of Benue State through the Ministry of information should sensitize the public on the appropriate way of choosing a marriage partner instead of trial and error method, there should be also enactment of law that will support the traditional family structure against harmful forces such as negative effects of globalization and negative education.



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