

**INFLUENCE OF PSYCHOSOCIAL COMPONENTS ON COHABITATION
BEHAVIOUR AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI, KENYA**

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DECLARATION AND APPROVAL

Declaration by the Student

This project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

Signature 

Date 19/05/2025

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Approval by the Supervisor

This project has been submitted with my approval as university supervisor.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate to God, in heaven for bringing me this far. To my husband Mbiro, my children Waithira, Muiruri and Wanjiru, for your encouragement.



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I am grateful to my Lecturers at Mount Kenya University for their support in my journey in knowledge acquisition. Special mention goes to my devoted Supervisor Dr. Gilbert Maroko Mokuu for his invaluable contribution to my project completion journey.



ABSTRACT

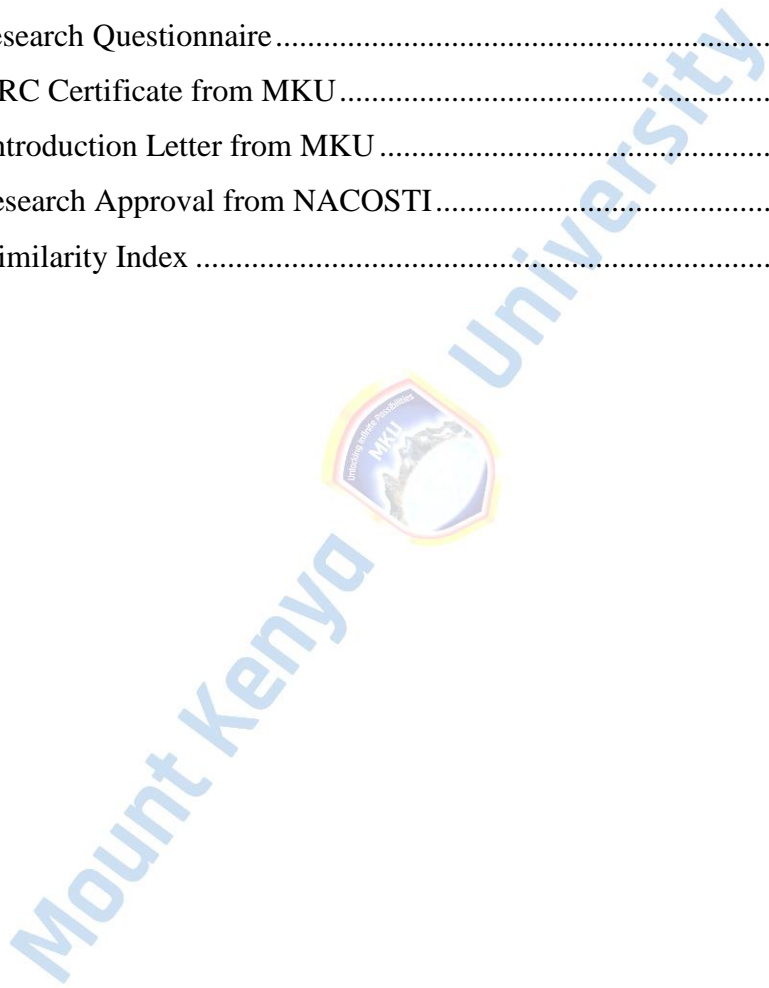
This study investigated the influence of psychosocial components on cohabitation behavior among undergraduate students at the University of Nairobi, Kenya, in response to rising trends of cohabitation among youth. The objectives included examining the impact of peer pressure, urban lifestyle, self-concept, and emotional support on students' decisions to cohabit. The research utilized a descriptive design, targeting a sample of 100 participants selected through snowball sampling from the larger undergraduate population of 47,700. Theoretical orientations included Bandura's Social Learning Theory and Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory. Data collection utilized structured questionnaires and was conducted in August 2023. The collected data was descriptively analyzed using percentages and correlations were used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings indicated a significant positive correlation between peer pressure and cohabitation behavior ($r = .294$, $p = .003$), demonstrating that students influenced by their peers were more likely to support cohabitation. Moreover, urban lifestyle demonstrated a strong positive correlation with cohabitation behavior ($r = .369$, $p < .01$), suggesting that exposure to urban settings facilitates acceptance of non-traditional living arrangements, with 75% of urban-influenced students in favor of cohabitation. In contrast, students with low self-concept showed increased likelihood for cohabitation, though the correlation between self-concept and cohabitation behavior was non-significant ($r = -0.164$, $p = .102$). Notably, emotional support revealed a perfect positive correlation ($r = 1.00$, $p < .01$) with cohabitation, suggesting that students who received greater emotional support were more likely to engage in cohabiting arrangements. The implications underscore the importance of peer influence and emotional backing in shaping young adults' relationship choices. Recommendations include developing university programs to address peer pressure and support emotional well-being, thus fostering informed relationship decisions among students. Future studies should explore the long-term implications of cohabitation, regional cultural influences, and qualitative insights into individual motivations for cohabiting. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of the evolving dynamics of partnerships among youth in Kenya, offering valuable perspectives for policymakers, educators, and counselors.

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ABBREVIATIONS

NACOSTI: National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation

SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Sciences



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

There is an increased concern over cohabitation behaviour among undergraduate students studying at the University of Nairobi. This cohabitation has serious psychological effects which have seen a significant number of students perform poorly, dropping out of their studies and even some experience violence.

An intimate sexual connection between two single people who live together continuously is referred to as cohabitation. Cohabiting is the term used to describe a relationship between individuals of the opposite sex who live together but are not married. The de-institutionalization of marriage, also known as the weakening of societal standards relating to marriage, can be seen as evidence of an increase in cohabitation (Rindfuss & Vanden Heuvel, 2019). Up until the 1970s, cohabitation was uncommon and even frowned upon. This is because the definition of the family has changed as a result of the gradual maturation of individualistic societal norms since the late 1940s (Sassler & Lichter, 2020).

In recent decades, the desire for stable families has gradually changed. This is a result of many young people choosing to live together before getting married. The age range between 20 and 25 years old and the late adolescent years are thought to be when young people are most likely to begin unrecognized heterosexual live-in relationships. Additionally, numerous premarital cohabitations is increasingly common. In addition, some cohabitants see cohabitation as a trial period for preparing for marriage, so it is important to comprehend the motivations behind this practice (Dew, 2021).

Globally, marriage is on the decline while cohabitation is on the rise. He adds that between 2001 and 2010, the population of the United States expanded by 9.71%, while cohabitation increased by 41.4%, compared to an increase in official marriage of 3.7% (Rosenfeld &

Roesler, 2019). According to a research by Strong and Cohen (2020), performed in America in 2010, 39% of the young people believed that marriage was becoming obsolete. In contrast, 28% of respondents provided comparable responses in the 1970s. Cohabitation is becoming increasingly prevalent, as evidenced by the fact that more children are being born in cohabiting homes than in single-parent homes. In American culture, there are more couples living together. The 1970s saw the emergence of the fad, and many Americans have since come to tolerate it. Official marriage is apparently not frowned upon in America, although some people are more inclined to cohabit than others, particularly those with poor incomes and little education (Sassler & Lichter, 2020).

Regional research indicates that cohabitation is increasing among youthful individuals in a number of African cities. Additionally, Calvès (2016) emphasizes the fact that marriage is a universal institution in Sub-Saharan Africa while also noting that significant modifications have been made to the institution over the past several decades in the region. According to Ahinkorah (2020), the line between cohabitation and marriage is hazy in Sub-Saharan Africa. Despite the fact that the process of forming a partnership differs depending on the marriage and region cannot be reduced to a single event. Furthermore, Christian marriage partnerships are subordinate to culture and tradition. Cohabitation is even more acceptable in light of polygamy.

According to Ojewola and Akinduyo's (2017) research, cohabitation is common among Nigerian university students. Since cohabitation was prohibited by strict laws and regulations for residents, the activity was particularly common among non-residential students. According to Calvès (2016), cohabitation was on the rise among Burkinabe youngsters in Burkina Faso, and many kids were exposed to it during their formative years.

In recent years, undergraduate cohabitation has been the subject of a lot of program evaluation, scholarly investigation, and discussions. Due to escalating tuition expenses and other related college costs linked with the supply of facilities and services, especially when it comes to on-campus living, students at higher education institutions are in a precarious position. Numerous barriers, both inside and outside of educational institutions, might promote student cohabitation. Economic prosperity is positively connected with the likelihood of cohabitation (Onoyase, 2020).

Based on a variety of psychological causes, cohabitation among college students is a widespread practice worldwide. One of the main factors that initiates cohabitation behaviour among college students has been identified as peer pressure (Uchenna, Sunday & Monday, 2018). According to a study by Lamidi, Manning, and Brown (2019) conducted in the United States, young adults including those in college are impacted by social networks when determining who to date and whether to cohabit before marriage. According to the study's findings, a lot of cohabitants and those considering the arrangement rely on their peers' approval to feel comfortable.

Cohabitation among African college students has also been proven to be influenced by urban lifestyle. Cohabitation among college students is common in Nigeria, based on western ideals, beliefs, and traditions, as well as social and information dissemination, and the conditions of urban life they experience because the majority of institutions are situated in metropolises and come with the urban lifestyle that they have (Kuperberg, 2019).

According to research conducted by various academics, self-concept is a psychological factor that is important in determining the cohabitation behaviour among college students. An individual's perception of their behaviours, abilities, and distinguishing characteristics is known as their self-concept. According to a study conducted in South Africa, the

problem of cohabitation among college students is caused by intra-individual variations in self-concept that result from many dynamic motivational forces among the students. This is crucial, especially when it comes to topics like how social relationships have a huge impact on role identities and how committed someone is to each particular function, which is heavily influenced by the opinions of important others (Mailhot & Feeney, 2017).

When it comes to university students living together, emotional support as a psychological factor is a crucial determinant. According to a study by Shaw et al. (2021) conducted in Uganda, intimacy is the main factor influencing the stability of a union. Therefore, people show relatively little resistance to a decline in the emotional gratification they experience in their romantic relationships. There were only slight differences between cohabitation and marriage, with cohabiting people benefiting more from higher levels of emotional support for the stability of their union.

In most of the societies in Kenya, cohabitation is a regular practice. Based on the many reasons that are available, cohabitation is widespread among college students. The proportion of sexually active university students has increased. According to Butto, Maina, and Murigi (2019), 70% of Kenyatta University students engaged in sexual activity. Additionally, it has been stated that more students are moving in together. Many people blame peer pressure and the low socioeconomic status of parents or guardians for the rise in cohabitation rates.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Since cohabitation goes against most society's conventions and beliefs, the majority of students who do so keep it a secret from their parents. As a result, the students are continually exposed to risk and harm of all sorts. The number of sexually active university students has increased. Approximately 70% of undergraduates are sexually mature in

Kenya. It has also been claimed that a good number of college students cohabiting in Kenya has increased over the years. The growth in cohabitation has been widely linked to a variety of factors, including poor economic situations (Butto, Maina & Murigi, 2019).

In Kenya, numerous research on cohabitation among university students have been carried out. According to Soboye (2013), cohabitation among tertiary students has occurred in numerous public colleges as a result of post-secondary institutions' failure to control the rising population by providing adequate dormitory housing. Aluko (2011) asserts that cohabitation is now typical among college students because of the continued growth in the student population and the lack of a corresponding rise in the number of residence halls or other physical amenities. According to Omolayo's (2012) research, peer pressure, the year of study, the fathers' educational background, the parents' domicile, their income, and their occupation as parents or guardians were all important influences on the cohabitation behaviour of the students. The cohabitation was not significantly influenced by the other variables, which included sex, age, and mothers' educational attainment.

There are various gaps that have been identified based on the studies that have been done in Kenya that have been captured in the previous paragraph. The first gap is that the studies have not been done at the University of Nairobi. The second gap is that the studies have not captured all the four objectives that the current study is aiming to investigate. Thirdly, the studies have applied various research designs such as case studies and exploratory research design, while the current study will apply the use of descriptive study design. Thus, the study aims to investigate the influence of psychosocial components on cohabitation among undergraduate students of University of Nairobi, Kenya.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The study aimed to investigate the influence of psychosocial components on cohabitation behaviour among undergraduate students of University of Nairobi, Kenya.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by following objectives:

- i. To determine the influence of peer pressure on cohabitation behaviour among undergraduate students.
- ii. To establish the influence of urban lifestyle on cohabitation behaviour among undergraduate students.
- iii. To determine the influence of self-concept on cohabitation behaviour among undergraduate students.
- iv. To assess the influence of emotional support on cohabitation behaviour among undergraduate students.
- v. To find intervention strategies to minimise cohabitation behaviour among undergraduate students.

1.5 Research Hypotheses

The study was guided by the following research hypotheses:

H₀₁: There is no significant statistical difference between peer pressure and cohabitation among undergraduate students at University of Nairobi, Kenya.

H₀₂: There is no significant statistical difference between Urban lifestyle and cohabitation among undergraduate students at University of Nairobi, Kenya.

H₀₃: There is no significant statistical difference between Self-concept and cohabitation among undergraduate students of University of Nairobi, Kenya.

H₀₄: There is no significant statistical difference between Emotional support and cohabitation among undergraduate students at University of Nairobi, Kenya.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study aimed to bring to light the influence of psychosocial components on cohabitation among undergraduate students of University of Nairobi, Kenya. The study finding will assist university administrators in developing and implementing policies and procedures that will effectively regulate the prevalence of cohabitation behaviour among students and mitigate the detrimental impacts that it has on them.

Parents, counsellors, family therapists, family professionals, and religious leaders may find the study's findings helpful for premarital counselling. The information may be used by non-governmental organizations and other institutions that focus on the development of young adults for workshops and seminars on young adult counselling.

1.7 Justification of the Study

The University of Nairobi has not conducted any studies with comparable goals to this one. The study's importance lies in the way it would have expanded on what is already

known about cohabitation behaviour among University of Nairobi students. Future studies may use the findings as a jumping off point to further investigate this area of cohabitation and include other variables that are not considered in this study.

1.8 Scope of the Study

The study sought to investigate the influence of psychosocial components on cohabitation behaviour among undergraduate students of University of Nairobi, Kenya. The study used descriptive study research design. The study collected data using structured questionnaires. The study was conducted in the month of August 2023.

1.9 Study Limitations

The primary limitation of the study resulted from some respondents being wary of its intent and hence unwilling to participate. The scope of this study is restricted to the University of Nairobi, so it is possible that it doesn't accurately reflect the overall condition among undergraduates in Kenya.

1.10 Delimitations of the Study

The study was carried out at the University of Nairobi. The study only targeted undergraduate students. The study only covered four variables; peer pressure, urban lifestyle, self-concept and emotional support.

1.11 Assumptions of the Study

- i. Undergraduate students experienced peer pressure.
- ii. Undergraduate students in the University of Nairobi were under the influence of urban lifestyle.

1.12 Operational Definition of Terms

Cohabitation: Living together as young adults and engaging in sexual activity before a religious ceremony.

Emotional support: It is described in the study as demonstrating concern and sympathy for another person. It may be spoken or unspoken.

Peer pressure: This is the propensity to adopt the standards and values of the group.

Self-concept: It is described in the study as how a person views their behaviours, skills, and distinctive qualities.

Undergraduates: This can be described as a student enrolled in a postsecondary institution who is pursuing a degree or a first degree.

Urban lifestyle: The study defines urban lifestyle as a collection of individual and group life activities that are practiced in cities and frequently compared to rural lifestyles.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter includes a review of related literature based on the study's objectives. The information was obtained from both primary and secondary sources and was based on the study's objectives. Furthermore, this chapter covers the theoretical framework that was used in the investigation as well as the conceptual framework for the research.

2.2 Cohabitation

Popoola and Ayandele (2019) define cohabitation as living together as (or like) wife and husband without ever being married or having a close relationship in a husband and wife-like manner. Cohabitants are people who share a home. Since marriage is frequently seen as the predecessor to, a threat to, or an alternative to cohabitation, the two are frequently contrasted and defined in relation to one another. Raultn and Régnier-Loilier (2020) adds that the institution of marriage is deteriorating in part due to divorce, remarriage, solo parenting, and step-families. Therefore, cohabitation is viewed as one of many activities that have distorted the establishment of unions in various communities around the world.

Thus, cohabiting partners often exhibit many characteristics of marriage, such as housing sharing, performing some matrimonial duties, having personal interactions, sharing financial resources, and occasionally having children (Boertien & Lersch, 2021). Prior to the consummation of the marriage, Boertien and Lersch (2021) further views cohabitation as a postulation that puts into practice the proverbial adage "see before you leap." Traditional marriage, however, refers to the privilege of sharing a home with another person as husband and wife, along with any associated incidents.

2.3 Influence of Peer Pressure on Cohabitation Behaviour

Peer socialization is intrinsically tied to the creation of sexual attitudes and marital difficulties. Even church-going young adults are impacted by social media when deciding who to date and whether to live with each other before getting married. Given that cohabitation is indeed not marriage, and because community and religious organizations frequently advocate Christian marriage above cohabitation, many cohabiting couples or those contemplating the set-up is based on the acceptance of their peers for support (Murrira, 2019).

Ileoye (2018) found a strong association between knowing persons who were living together and having a favourable attitude about cohabitation. The survey also showed that a sizable proportion of participants preferred cohabitation as a result of the impact of those who they knew to be cohabiting. It was clear that Japan was going through a progressive change in union creation that could have an impact on the demographic structure. On the other side, the study's respondents reported that cohabitation was discouraged for roughly 40% of them due to the high rates of separation among cohabiting couples. Peer networks essentially have both good and negative effects on respondents' perceptions of cohabitation.

According to a study by Jiya and Alhassan (2019), the majority of young adults who live together do so under peer pressure. Even while church workshops and sermons stress abstinence and the sacredness of marriage, young individuals nevertheless succumb to the lure of cohabitation since "everyone does it," notwithstanding these teachings. They engage in this behaviour despite what the religion teaches in order to avoid ridicule and to receive approval from their peers. This has an impact on acceptance in a certain age range.

Young people, regardless of religious affiliation, may feel pressured by society to join unions before receiving the appropriate training. According to Kasim, Omirin, and Okoro (2018), peer pressure was a major factor that influenced cohabitation decisions and behaviours among university students in Nigeria. The poll discovered a 27.4% prevalence rate of cohabitation, which is unusual for a learning institution and may give other students the notion that cohabitation is normal and desirable. Cohabitation is growing more widespread among university students from different religious affiliations in Africa, according to Ojewola and Akinduyo (2017) research in Nigeria. According to this study, peer pressure may have a factor in young people's decision to cohabit.

According to a South African study, peer pressure is the main reason why young people engage in premarital sex and cohabitation. Because "everyone does it," they succumb to temptation when they observe their peers. They perform it to avoid ridicule and to win the approval of their peers. Cohabitation and premarital sex have ultimately evolved into different types of "passports" to acceptance in a specific age group (Ntloko & Kheswa, 2018).

In their study, Temple, Adewole, and Fagbenro (2021) found peer pressure to be a significant factor in determining whether or not a young adult will cohabit. Most young adults who practice cohabitation do so as a result of peer pressure. Although church sermons and seminars stress the importance of abstinence and the sacredness of marriage, young adults nevertheless succumb to peer pressure to cohabit because "everyone does it." They engage in this behaviour despite what the religion teaches in order to avoid ridicule and to receive approval from their peers. This has an impact on acceptance in a certain age range. In addition, peer pressure may force young people, regardless of their religious affiliations, to form unions without first obtaining necessary training. Peers have a huge influence on marriage decisions.

2.4 Influence of Urban lifestyle on Cohabitation

Urban lifestyles globally have significantly altered socio-cultural norms, particularly in intimate relationships and cohabitation behaviour among young adults. These changes are often influenced by economic factors, cultural shifts, and social constructs in rapidly urbanizing environments. Cohabitation, once stigmatized, has increasingly become normalized as a viable alternative to marriage in many parts of the world (Manning & Smock, 2005).

Research indicates that urban settings foster diverse relationships, as individuals are exposed to various social influences, leading to non-traditional living arrangements (Cherlin, 2004). For instance, studies demonstrate that educational opportunities and career aspirations motivate undergraduates to pursue cohabitation as a means of emotional and financial support (Bowers et al., 2015). Moreover, urbanization seems to weaken traditional family structures, allowing for alternative living arrangements (Lesthaeghe, 2010).

However, the trends differ based on regional contexts, particularly between global North and South. Scholars emphasize that urban cohabitation patterns are shaped by local laws, cultural frameworks, and family expectations (Kuperberg, 2014). Global migration contributes further to this narrative, influencing young people's decisions regarding cohabitation based on their previous experiences and cultural backgrounds (Perkins & Eroglu, 2016).

Large numbers of recent immigrants contribute to the urban population, which has a specific household size and makeup. When men, women, and children do not migrate in the same movement, migration disrupts patterns of family residence. In terms of living arrangements and union kinds, there are also several modifications (Kuperberg, 2019).

Cohabitation without marriage first appeared historically, and it spread more quickly in cities. In an urban environment, divorce and visiting relationships also evolved more quickly. Although there are more large or extended families in rural areas than in cities, it is commonly noted that households in urban areas are larger than those in rural ones (Kuperberg, 2019).

Urban life can be challenging and requires a solid economic environment. As a cause of cohabitation and as a result of these unions, economic issues are crucial. All income levels of college students may move in together to save money, but those with the lowest income and educational attainment are the least likely to get married while living together. The majority of young adults think that living together is a smart way to measure compatibility. They contend that living together allows one to truly get to know their mate (Jamison, 2018).

In their research on cohabitation in China, Shi and Lievens (2022) found that economic growth hastens the breakdown of conventional family structures. On the one hand, as a result of China's urban and unequal economic development, young people are increasingly leaving their impoverished native lands for contemporary cities in search of a better life. The direct and conventional effect of parents on their children's family composition was hampered by this trend. Young people have more flexibility in their choice of relationship and living situation without parental direct involvement.

In various East Asian countries, premarital cohabitation has increased noticeably, especially in urban and metropolitan areas. Despite the rising incidence of cohabitation, East Asian nations still far from giving cohabiting unions the same significant status in the growth of partnerships (both legally and culturally) as the West. Due to the tight cultural norms that surround the subject of marriage, cohabitation in East Asia is instead short-

lived and, in most circumstances, better regarded as a precursor to marriage, which has an impact on people who leave the city for the countryside (Raymo et al., 2015).

Cohabitation is becoming a more frequent situation where pregnancy occurs in cities that have evolved and have absorbed some parts of western world cultures, despite the fact that childrearing within cohabitation or outside marriage is very rare. Since they are not impacted by the rigorous restrictions that are followed, for example, in rural regions, metropolitan areas have lifestyles that are primarily influenced by the global lifestyle, making it simpler for university students to adopt such lifestyles (Qian & Jin, 2020).

In the African context, urbanization has introduced extensive changes in social interactions and cohabitation behaviours, particularly among youth. Urban life in Africa often reflects a blend of traditional norms and modern influences, resulting in complex dynamics regarding relationships (Akintoye & Toriola, 2020). Cohabitation among university students can be frequently attributed to economic factors, as students often live with partners to reduce living expenses (Mokhoma & Modise, 2018).

Research indicates that the perception of cohabitation in African cities is changing, influenced by exposure to global media and the adoption of Western ideals about relationships (Mavundla et al., 2015). In urban centers, cohabitation may signify independence and personal freedom, challenging conventional views of marriage and courtship within many African societies (Baffoe & Osei-Tutu, 2019). Additionally, access to education among young women has contributed to decisions about cohabitation, as they pursue both personal and educational aspirations (Okafor, 2016). This complexity indicates a shift in traditional values, predominantly in urban environments. A number of causes, including increased urbanization, have been ascribed to the emergence of one-person families. The majority of families reportedly live apart due to people's migration to

urban areas and increased mobility (Dube, 2019). At this point, young adults who are employed find housing in an urban area, which causes families to live apart. Additionally, the excessive rise in partnership patterns like cohabitation in this region is attributed to the destabilization of polygamy as a result of growing urbanization in nations like South Africa and the failure to return to this polygamy practice amid the collapse of marriage (Lau & Kim, 2021).

In Kenya, particularly among students at the University of Nairobi, cohabitation is increasingly viewed as an appropriate lifestyle choice among the youth, significantly influenced by urbanization and changing perceptions of relationships. A study found that many students engage in cohabitation as a pragmatic solution to the higher living costs in urban areas (Luvanda, 2021). The interplay between educational commitments and the need for social support often leads to the establishment of cohabiting partnerships (Gikonyo & Muchemi, 2019).

Cohabitation is also affected by cultural expectations and educational factors, as many students balance familial obligations with personal aspirations (Njuguna, 2018). This creates unique circumstances for students where traditional norms regarding relationships and cohabitation are challenged. Furthermore, factors such as peer influence and exposure to different societal norms play significant roles in shaping their cohabitation behaviours (Mbiti & Wangari, 2020).

Recent studies reflect that, among Kenyan students, cohabitation is often justified as a precursor to marriage, creating a nuanced understanding of modern relationships compared to past generations (Okech, 2019). Importantly, the impact of urbanization on these lifestyles is significant, leading to shifts not only in individual relationship choices but also in broader cultural narratives regarding youth and marriage in Kenya

2.5 Influence of Self-concept on Cohabitation

The conception of the self-concept has undergone a significant development in recent decades. Initially perceived as a single, fixed entity, the self-concept has evolved into a multi-layered, dynamic structure that regulates and directs how people receive information about themselves in all facets of their life (Zeigler-Hill & Shackelford, 2020).

To put it more precisely, one's self-concepts include knowledge of who or what they are, or self-related beliefs, as well as an assessment of how they feel about themselves. People correlate valences with their self-beliefs to create positive or negative self-evaluations. Although a person's self-concept may appear to be firm to them, it is actually flexible and dynamic throughout time, being construed and shaped by their perceptions of themselves, experiences, and environments. People's life experiences and self-concepts in particular are inversely correlated (Zeigler-Hill & Shackelford, 2020). The relationship between social circumstances and behavioural patterns is mediated by self-concepts, which are formed through personal experiences but are also constantly influenced by existing social norms and power structures in the environment (Zeigler-Hill & Shackelford, 2020).

There is growing evidence that suggests, in addition to its affiliations with relationship engagement and relationship involvement in relationships, self-concept clarity is related to relationship functioning, as elevated concentrations of self-concept clarification have been connected to better relationship quality in earlier studies. In particular, contentment, commitment to relationships, and dyadic adjustment all positively correlate with self-concept clarity. Further supporting evidence for the importance of clarity in relationships comes from the finding that a person's impression of the self-concept of his or her partner, also referred as significant-other-concept coherence, may affect relationship value. Couples who have more solid and well-defined ideas about their partner's self-concept report higher levels of relationship quality, less disagreement, and better involvement of

their partner in themselves. The relevance of dyadic features of clarity in understanding relationships is demonstrated by the interesting correlations between significant-other and self-concept clarity.

Slotter and Gardner (2012) discovered in their study that people with higher levels of attachment anxiety desire more intimacy and closeness in their cohabiting relationships than people with lower levels of anxiety. Therefore, in cohabiting partnerships, their self-concepts may be more changeable. The study's findings also showed that people's identities are flexible in romantic cohabitation. Individuals specifically incorporate partner traits into their self-concepts to further closeness/intimacy aims. Unfortunately, if a relationship terminates, this malleability in cohabiting partnerships indicates a change or confusion in one's self-concept.

Self-concept clarity, which differs from self-esteem in both theory and practice, is a powerful predictor of self-disclosure, according to Tajmirriyahi and Ickes' (2020) study. Discussing specific aspects of one's self that are perceived clearly, such as one's traits, goals, motivations, values, etc., may be more important for daily self-disclosure than trying to discuss one's person's self, as evidenced by the multiple regression models' tendency to replace self-esteem with self-concept clarity.

2.6 Influence of Emotional support on Cohabitation Behaviour

Regardless of whether they are married or cohabiting, a person's present partnership status may be the most important factor in determining their current well-being. Living with a partner typically offers companionship, everyday interaction, and sexual and emotional closeness, all of which can contribute to wellbeing. An intimate relationship can offer assistance, support on a social and emotional level, and promote positive behaviours. Additionally, couples frequently introduce one another to larger friend and family

networks that can offer social support. Having a shared home and living together can result in cost savings (Jia & Ye, 2019).

For those who were cohabiting romantically, emotional support has been linked to higher relationship satisfaction, whereas for those who were married, negative contact was linked to poorer relationship happiness. Only two out of six potential correlations were significant, but the pattern of data supports earlier research on the significance of family links for relationship satisfaction. These dissimilar patterns might be indicative of cultural and life situational variations that affect how families and social networks function in cohabiting relationships (Taylor, Brown, Chatters & Lincoln, 2012).

In cohabiting relationships, relationship-oriented motivation can take the form of engaging in sexual activities to promote emotional intimacy and closeness or, in the case of avoidant motive, engaging in sexual activity to maintain the relationship's stability. According to various research, the contrast between ego- and relationship-oriented objectives may be slightly more important for paired women. In healthy cohabiting couples, higher levels of relationship satisfaction and emotional closeness were observed to increase the likelihood of growing sexual interest, while lower levels increased the likelihood of reporting a reduction in interest in sex during the pandemic (Borelli et al., 2019).

Living with a partner typically offers companionship, everyday interaction, and sexual and emotional closeness, all of which can contribute to wellbeing. An intimate partner can offer assistance, support socially and emotionally, and promote positive behaviours (tulhofer et al., 2022). Additionally, couples frequently introduce one another to larger friend and family networks that can offer social support. Having a shared home and living together can result in cost savings. Low-income couples, who have acknowledged that housing expenses were a factor in their decision to move in together in qualitative

interviews conducted in the United Kingdom, may find the savings to be especially significant (Berrington et al., 2015).

Cohabitation can strengthen a couple's relationship since some couples are able to conceive children, in addition to providing psychological support and a guarantee of typically safe and regular sex (Duyilemi, Tunde-Awe & Adekola-Lois, 2018). Cohabitation is a common practice among widows and divorcees as a stress-relieving break from being single. Similar to this, unmarried women were welcomed into the home of the child's presumed father, saving them from the “embarrassment” of raising “illegitimate” children in the ladies’ home (Uka, 2015).

Therefore, it's probable that cohabiters experience crossover stress less severely than spouses in terms of financial and emotional costs, as well as its detrimental effects on mental health. These differences according to marital status encourage the use of couple-level data to examine crossover stress in relationships as it lessens the risk of assumed-similarity bias and the chance that cohabiters in particular might not know enough about one another (Hu, Su & Zhang, 2021).

2.7 Theoretical Framework

The research explained the relationship between the various variables stated in the research objectives and identified gaps in existing knowledge using a specific conceptual framework. It will be also used to guide the researcher in interpreting the research results and formulate recommendations.

2.7.1 Albert Bandura’s Social Learning Theory

According to Albert Bandura's (1986, 1998) social cognitive theory, conduct is influenced by both the environment in which it occurs and the way in which thoughts affect that behaviour. According to Bandura, a person's behaviour, environment, and cognitive

elements interact in a reciprocal fashion such that each has an impact on the other and is in turn affected by it. According to Bandura, an individual's ability to act to change their surroundings might therefore be determined by their environment (Rumjaun & Narod, 2020). In other words, cognitive factors that an individual possesses can affect behaviour that an individual may have picked up socially, and vice versa. Self-efficacy, the conviction that one can control a situation and bring about desired outcomes, is one of the cognitive elements (Bandura & Hall, 2018).

Social cognitive theorists differ from behaviourists in that they emphasize that an individual can regulate and control their own behaviour despite their environment changing. In other words, a person can recognize issues in their environment, whether they are stereotypical or not, and choose their course of action without following the rules of the current social and physical conditions. For instance, a person might see their supervisor acting arrogantly and sarcastically with less experienced workers at work but find that behaviour repulsive. He or she does not imitate the offensive behaviour, but instead uses thought to analyse the repercussions of such behaviour, and then makes an effort to assist and encourage his or her juniors (Albert, 2017).

Another instance is when someone might attempt to convince the other to join a specific club. The person under persuasion thinks about the offer, takes into account his or her values and interests, and decides not to join the group. One's thought process, which determines behaviour, enables them to fend off pressure from their environment. In a similar way, male preschool instructors may have chosen that career path based on their own convictions rather than succumbing to external pressure and forces (Akers, 2017).

2.7.2 Psychosocial Theory of Development

Erik Erikson, a former Sigmund Freud student, was the author of this theory. By embracing the social idea of development, he updated the Freudian psychosexual phases of development, which include the oral, anal, phallic, latent, and genital stages. He used different backgrounds while working with youngsters, which aided in comprehending their behaviour. He described how social environment and enforcement have an impact on personality (Orenstein & Lewis, 2021). It is claimed that every stage of life has a crisis, which must be resolved either positively or negatively at that point. If one comes to a negative conclusion, therapy is required; nevertheless, if one comes to a positive conclusion, one becomes stable and flexible (Maree, 2022).

The Intimacy vs. Isolation: Psychosocial Stage 6 (18-40 years) is used in the study because this is the age group that enrolls in college the most frequently for undergraduate courses. Young adulthood is defined as being between the ages of 19 and 40. The most difficult aspect of life at this point is forming close, loving relationships with folks. Achieving this goal leads to rewarding collaborations. Fighting today, on the other hand, may make you feel alone and lonely (Sekowski, 2022).

People now begin to divulge more personal information concerning themselves to others. We look at connections that become lifelong commitments with people who are not family. A couple may have happy connections as well as a feeling of commitment, security, and empathy if this stage is finally done. Isolation, loneliness, and potentially depression can result from avoiding connection and disliking commitment and relationships. The love-quality will arise from success at this stage (Svetina, 2014).

2.8 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is presented in Figure 1. The conceptual framework captures the independent and the dependent variables of the study. The independent variables are

psychosocial components represented by peer pressure, urban lifestyle, self-concept and emotional support. On the other hand, the dependent variable is cohabitation.

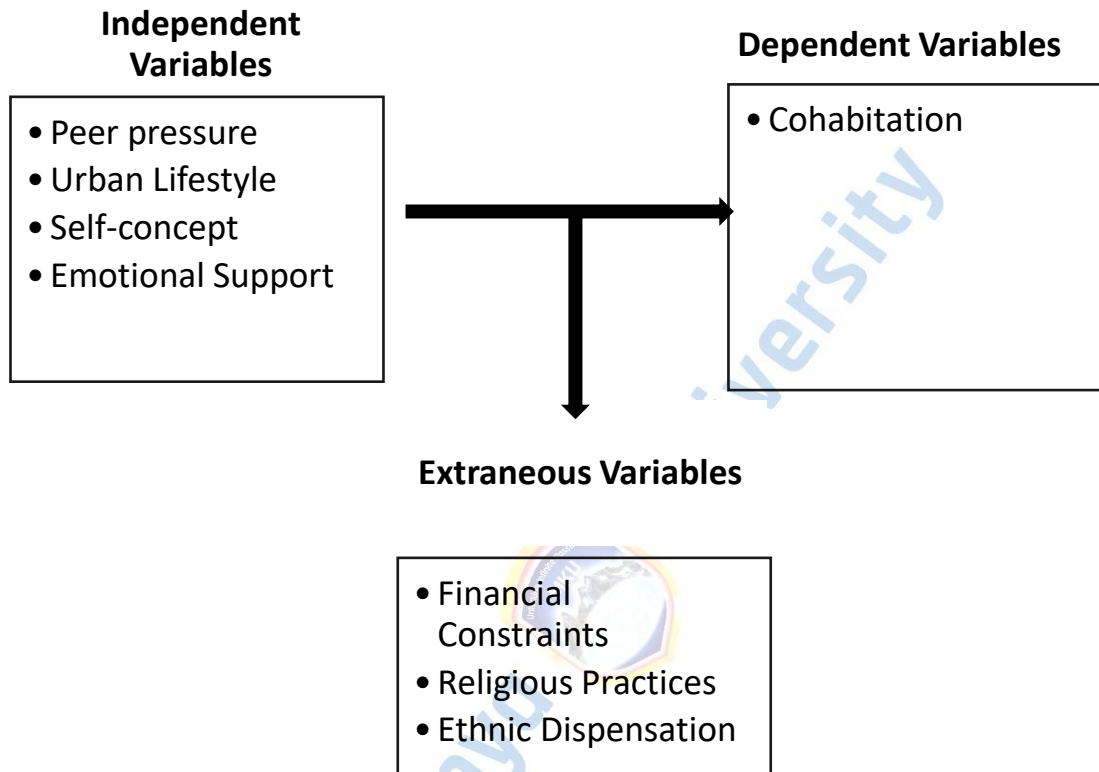


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

2.9 Summary of Literature Review

The study covered various studies in relation to the study topic. The literature has been grouped into the four sections. The first section has captured studies that have been done in relation to peer pressure and cohabitation that has shown a positive effect of peer pressure on cohabitation as indicated by some authors such as Jiya and Alhassan (2019). Regarding urban lifestyle and cohabitation, most of the studies that have been captured in the literature section have indicated that there is a positive relationship as supported by the findings of studies such as the one done by Raymo et al. (2015). Self-concept has been found to have mixed effect on the issue of cohabitation based on the various findings of

studies that have been captured in the section. Lastly, the literature section has covered studies that have investigated the concept of emotional support and cohabitation as indicated by various studies such as the one done by Hu, Su and Zhang (2021). Additionally, the section has covered theories that are related to the study and the ones that will shape the explanation of the findings and also the variables of the study findings.

2.10 Research Gaps

The studies that have been captured have revealed various research gaps that the current study aimed to fill. The first gap that is captured in the studies is that a majority of them have been done outside Kenya and thus their findings do not capture the exact situation of what is happening in Kenya. Thus, there is the need to conduct a study in Kenya. The second gap established in the studies is that most of them have not been done among the undergraduate students and thus the current study fills the existing gap.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section captures the steps and methods that were be used in conducting the study. The section captures the research design, target population, sample size and sampling technique, data collection instruments, data collection procedures, pretesting (validity and reliability), data analysis and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Design

A study design, in the words of Creswell & Creswell (2003), is a strategy outlining how the issues under examination are resolved. In this study, a case descriptive research design was used. Descriptive research was to ascertain and document how things are (Mugenda and Mugenda 2003). Crowther and Lancaster (2012) assert that the primary goal of descriptive research is to describe the current state of circumstances. This design is suited for this study because it seeks to collect descriptive, self-reported data from University of Nairobi undergraduate students.

3.3 Target Population

Any group of people or organizations that the researcher is interested in might be considered the population or universe for the study if they share one or more relevant features (Cooper, Schindler & Sun, 2006). The target population for the study included the undergraduate students at the University of Nairobi, Main Campus. The population of the undergraduate students at the main campus of University of Nairobi is 47,700. Thus, the study targeted 47,700 students. Table 1 presents the target population.

Table 1: Target Population

Gender	Population
Male	25654
Female	22046
Total	47,700

Table 1 show that there are 25,654 male students and 22,046 female students. The total population is 47,700 students.

3.4 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

Sampling was done on the students who were in session. Snowball Sampling was used to select the sample because the issue of cohabitation is sensitive. The study employed Slovin's formula to calculate the sample size.

Slovin's formula is:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

Where n = number of samples, N = total population and e = error margin / margin of error.

$$n = 47,700 / [(1 + 47,700(0.1)^2)]$$

$$= 100 \text{ students}$$

Therefore, the sample size was 100 students.

The sample is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Sample Size

Gender	Population
Male	56
Female	44
Total	100

Table 2 shows that there are 56 male students and 44 female students who were form the sample size. The sample size is 100 students.

3.5 Data Collection Procedures

The university provided the researcher with an introduction letter. The questionnaires were distributed by the researcher. Control was utilized to ensure that all questionnaires submitted to respondents were received by keeping track of those that were disseminated and those that were received. The questionnaires were open to respondents for 30 minutes. The full data collection process lasted 5 days, 20 questionnaires were distributed to responders each day.

3.6 Piloting

The researcher conducted a pilot trial to determine the research instrument's reliability and validity. The pilot study was conducted at University of Nairobi main campus. The study targeted 10 respondents for the pilot. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) indicated that 10% of the total sampled population is perfect for a pilot study.

3.6.1 Validity

How well a test measures what it is intended to measure is a measure of its validity (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). A pre-test was given to a sample population representative of the key demographic to assess the instruments' reliability and validity. The items were altered or removed as a result of the researcher being able to identify those that are inappropriate for assessing the variables. As a result, the study instrument's quality increased, increasing its validity.

3.6.2 Reliability

The degree to which a study's planned instrument can be used repeatedly under the same circumstances and yield the same results is referred to as its reliability (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). The dependability of the instruments was calculated using information gathered from the pilot research. The pilot study's questionnaires were coded and entered into SPSS version 27 to generate the unwavering quality coefficient. The reliability of the research

instrument used in this study was 0.936 aligning with the threshold the 0.7 Cronbach alpha coefficient as per Kombo and Tromp (2006).

3.7 Data Analysis

The accuracy of the data and information gathered through the questionnaires was first verified. Using SPSS version 27, the quantitative data collected from correctly completed surveys were processed, tabulated, and analysed. Inferential statistics, specifically the Pearson correlation, was used to evaluate the relationship between the dependent and independent variables when testing the study's hypotheses. Descriptive statistics, such as mean, percentage, and standard deviation, was computed to capture the characteristics of the variables under study. The significance level for the Pearson correlation was set at 0.05.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Before starting the data gathering exercise, the researcher got permission from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI). The researcher also received a letter from the university approving the acquisition of data. Three fundamental ethical principles of beneficence, respect, and justice was applied in this study.

The study was taken into account the respondents' emotions. After the study, the participants were debriefed to guarantee their emotional status. The respondents were also informed that the data they provide would only be used for academic purposes. In order to not interfere with the respondents' course schedule, contact time was observed. Contacting the respondents during lunch breaks that helped achieve this. The utmost degree of sincerity was upheld, and integrity, as in the researcher's verbal and written explanations of the study's objectives to respondents. By not collecting the respondents' identities, the researcher guaranteed the respondents' privacy and confidentiality thereby ensuring their integrity. There won't be any coercion, and the exercise was optional.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The section presents reliability of the task, questionnaire return rate, demographic characteristics and findings related to the research objectives.

4.2 Questionnaire Return rate

In this study questionnaires were administered to a sample size of 100 participants. The return rate for the study was 100%, as all 100 questionnaires were filled out and collected. This high return rate indicates a strong engagement and willingness from the participants to provide information needed in the study. The comprehensive data collected contributed to a thorough analysis of how psychosocial components impact the cohabitation behaviours of undergraduate students.

4.3 Demographic Characteristics of Participants

This section outlines the key demographic variables that influence effects of psychosocial components on cohabitation namely gender, year of study, and age.

4.3.1 Gender and Year of Study

This sub-section explores the interplay between participants' gender and year of study and how they shape their cohabitation behaviours. The findings are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Gender and Year of Study

			Respondent Gender		Total
			Male	Female	
Year of study	1st Year	N	10	10	20
		% of Total	10.0%	10.0%	20.0%
	2nd Year	N	5	10	15
		% of Total	5.0%	10.0%	15.0%
	3rd Year	N	15	12	27
		% of Total	15.0%	12.0%	27.0%
	4th Year	N	13	9	22
		% of Total	13.0%	9.0%	22.0%
	5th Year	N	5	3	8
		% of Total	5.0%	3.0%	8.0%
	6th Year	N	3	5	8
		% of Total	3.0%	5.0%	8.0%
Total		N	51	49	100
		% of Total	51.0%	49.0%	100.0%

Table 3 details the responses of participants based on their gender and year of study. In total, there were 100 respondents, composed of 51 males (51.0%) and 49 females (49.0%). In the 1st year, there were 20 respondents, evenly split with 10 males and 10 females, each representing 10.0% of the overall total. The 2nd year included 15 respondents, with 5 males (5.0%) and 10 females (10.0%). In the 3rd year, a total of 27 respondents participated, consisting of 15 males (15.0%) and 12 females (12.0%). For the 4th year, there were 22 respondents, comprising of 13 males (13.0%) and 9 females (9.0%). The 5th year saw 8 respondents, with 5 males (5.0%) and 3 females (3.0%). Lastly, the 6th year included another 8 respondents, featuring 3 males (3.0%) and 5 females (5.0%).

4.3.2 Gender and Age

This sub-section explores the interplay between participants' gender and age and how they shape their cohabitation behaviours. The findings are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Gender and Age

			Respondent Gender		Total
			Male	Female	
Respondent Age	18-23 Years	N	37	41	78
		% of Total	37.0%	41.0%	78.0%
	24-27 Years	N	13	5	18
		% of Total	13.0%	5.0%	18.0%
	Over 27 Years	N	1	3	4
		% of Total	1.0%	3.0%	4.0%
Total		N	51	49	100
		% of Total	51.0%	49.0%	100.0%

Table 4 shows that among the respondents aged 18-23 years, 37 were male, making up 37.0% of the total respondents, while 41 were female, representing 41.0% of the total. This group accounted for 78 participants, which was 78.0% of the total. For the age category of 24-27 years, there were 13 males and 5 females, resulting in a total of 18 respondents. Males in this age range constituted 13.0% of the total, whereas females made up 5.0%. In the oldest age category, over 27 years, there was 1 male and 3 females, totaling 4 respondents. This group represented 1.0% of males and 3.0% of females in the sample, which corresponded to 4.0% of the total population surveyed.

4.3.3 Year of the study and Age

This sub-section explores the interplay between participants' year of study and age and how they shape their cohabitation behaviours. The findings are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Year of the study and Age

			Respondent Age			Total
			18-23 Years	24-27 Years	Over 27 Years	
Year of study	1st Year	Count	20	0	0	20
		% of Total	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%
	2nd Year	Count	15	0	0	15
		% of Total	15.0%	0.0%	0.0%	15.0%
	3rd Year	Count	25	2	0	27
		% of Total	25.0%	2.0%	0.0%	27.0%
	4th Year	Count	18	4	0	22
		% of Total	18.0%	4.0%	0.0%	22.0%
	5th Year	Count	0	8	0	8
		% of Total	0.0%	8.0%	0.0%	8.0%
	6th Year	Count	0	4	4	8
		% of Total	0.0%	4.0%	4.0%	8.0%
Total		Count	78	18	4	100
		% of Total	78.0%	18.0%	4.0%	100.0%

Table 5 shows that in the 1st year, there were a total of 20 respondents; all aged 18-23 years, which constituted 20.0% of the total respondents. The 2nd year had 15 respondents, all also in the 18-23 age group, making up 15.0% of the overall total. In the 3rd year, the count increased to 27 respondents, with 25 in the 18–23-year category (25.0%), 2 in the 24–27-year group (2.0%), and none over 27 years. The 4th year recorded a total of 22 respondents, which included 18 aged 18-23 years (18.0%) and 4 aged 24-27 years (4.0%). The 5th year indicated a shift with 8 respondents; all aged 24-27 years, resulting in 8.0% of the total. In the 6th year, there were 8 respondents as well, comprised of 4 in the 24–27-year category (4.0%) and 4 over 27 years (4.0%). In total, there were 100 respondents surveyed, with 78 (78.0%) aged 18-23 years, 18 (18.0%) aged 24-27 years, and 4 (4.0%) over 27 years.

4.4 Findings and Discussion

The findings and subsequent discussions of this study are based on the following objectives:

- i. To determine the influence of peer pressure on cohabitation behaviour among undergraduate students.
- ii. To establish the influence of urban lifestyle on cohabitation behaviour among undergraduate students.
- iii. To determine the influence of self-concept on cohabitation behaviour among undergraduate students.
- iv. To assess the influence of emotional support on cohabitation behaviour among undergraduate students.

4.4.1 Peer Pressure and Cohabitation Behaviour

University life is often characterized by a transformative journey filled with opportunities for personal growth and social interaction. As students navigate this pivotal phase, they are not only exposed to academic challenges but also to a dynamic social environment that can significantly shape their behaviours and choices. Among the myriad factors influencing university students, peer pressure stands out as a critical component that can dictate various aspects of their lives, including cohabitation behaviour. The first objective of this study was to determine the influence of peer pressure on cohabitation behaviour among undergraduate students. The findings are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Peer Pressure and Cohabitation

			Cohabitation Behaviour		Total
			Not in Favour of cohabitation	In favour of cohabitation	
Peer pressure	Not influenced by peer pressure	Count	32	28	60
		% within Peer pressure	53.3%	46.7%	100.0%
	Undecided	Count	4	18	22
		% within Peer pressure	18.2%	81.8%	100.0%
	Influenced by peer pressure	Count	4	14	18
		% within Peer pressure	22.2%	77.8%	100.0%
Total	Count		40	60	100
	% within Peer pressure		40.0%	60.0%	100.0%
	Peer pressure				

Table 6 shows that among those not influenced by peer pressure, 32 (53.3%) are not in favour of cohabitation, whereas 28 (46.7%) are in favour, leading to a total of 60 participants in this category. In the "Undecided" group, 4 (18.2%) are not in favour while a significantly higher number, 18 (81.8%), are in favour, totalling 22 participants. Lastly, within the "Influenced by peer pressure" group, 4 (22.2%) oppose cohabitation, while 14 (77.8%) support it, resulting in 18 participants. In total, across all categories, there are 40 (40.0%) not in favour of cohabitation and 60 (60.0%) in favour, totalling 100 participants. The examination of attitudes towards cohabitation among participants across different influences reveals a complex interplay between peer pressure, societal norms, and individual beliefs about relationships. Among those who reported no influence from peer pressure, a majority, 53.3%, are not in favor of cohabitation, suggesting a significant segment holds traditional views on partnerships that lean toward the institution of marriage. This group's opposition to cohabitation might reflect a commitment to

conventional values that prioritize marriage as the preferred framework for intimate relationships.

In contrast, the "Undecided" group showcases a more favorable attitude towards cohabitation, with a striking 81.8% expressing support. This indicates that uncertainty in one's stance may lead to more openness and acceptance of cohabitation as an alternative to marriage. This finding can be interpreted within the context of modern societal shifts where marriage is compared against cohabitation in terms of practicality and emotional compatibility. The considerable support for cohabitation within the undecided group highlights an inclination among many young adults to explore relationships on terms that differ from traditional marriage without firm commitments.

The dynamics shift markedly within the group influenced by peer pressure, where the results mirror a broader cultural trend towards cohabitation. Here, 77.8% support living together outside of marriage, revealing how peer influence can shape perceptions. This might resonate with findings by Jiya and Alhassan (2019), which argue that exposure to cohabiting peers normalizes the behaviour among young adults, leading to a social acceptance that transcends religious and traditional teachings. The influence of peers appears to act as a double-edged sword—while it fosters acceptance, it may also pressure individuals into cohabitory arrangements that they might not have otherwise considered, as highlighted by the studies on the impact of peer networks on the views of cohabitation. Further contextualizing these findings with the research of Murrira (2019), we see that the perception of cohabitation is not merely an individual choice but a reflection of a shared social reality where the approval of peers plays a crucial role. The normalization of cohabitation, particularly among youths, can be attributed to a shifting narrative in societal values that prioritize relationship exploration over the traditional notion of marriage. The detrimental impact of high divorce rates and the rise of alternative family structures

(Raultn & Régnier-Loilier, 2020) likely contribute to changing attitudes, creating fertile ground for cohabitation to thrive as a widely accepted practice. Table 7 presents findings on cohabitation based on friends' experiences.

Table 7: Cohabitation Based on Friends' Experiences

			Cohabitation behaviour		Total
			Not in favour of cohabitation	In favour of cohabitation	
Most of my friends are cohabiting and I felt that I could try it too	Strongly disagree	Count % within B2a. Most of my friends are cohabiting and I felt that I could try it	5 62.5%	3 37.5%	8 100.0%
	Disagree	Count % within B2a. Most of my friends are cohabiting and I felt that I could try it	15 57.7%	11 42.3%	26 100.0%
	Neutral	Count % within B2a. Most of my friends are cohabiting and I felt that I could try it	12 44.4%	15 55.6%	27 100.0%
	Agree	Count % within B2a. Most of my friends are cohabiting and I felt that I could try it	5 15.2%	28 84.8%	33 100.0%
	Strongly agree	Count % within B2a. Most of my friends are cohabiting and I felt that I could try it	0 0.0%	3 100.0%	3 100.0%
Total	Count % within B2a. Most of my friends are cohabiting and I felt that I could try it	37 38.1%	60 61.9%	97 100.0%	

Table 7 presents data on cohabitation behaviour preferences regarding the sentiment of trying cohabitation based on friends' experiences. Out of a total of 97 respondents, 37 (38.1%) are not in favor of cohabitation, while 60 (61.9%) are in favor. Among those who are not in favor, 5 (62.5%) strongly disagree, 15 (57.7%) disagree, 12 (44.4%) are neutral, and 5 (15.2%) agree; notably, none strongly agree. Conversely, among those in favor of

cohabitation, 3 (37.5%) strongly disagree, 11 (42.3%) disagree, 15 (55.6%) are neutral, 28 (84.8%) agree, and 3 (100%) strongly agree. The data illustrates a clear tendency towards favoring cohabitation, with a significant number of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing compared to those who are opposed or neutral.

Peer socialization is a significant factor in shaping an individual's attitudes and behaviours towards cohabitation. Research has shown that young adults are more likely to engage in cohabitation if they know someone who is living together or if their peers are doing it. In fact, a study by Ileoye (2018) found a strong association between knowing persons who were living together and having a favorable attitude about cohabitation.

Moreover, peer pressure can be a significant motivator for young adults to engage in cohabitation. A study by Kasim, Omirin, and Okoro (2018) found that peer pressure was a major factor that influenced cohabitation decisions and behaviours among university students in Nigeria. Similarly, a study by Ojewola and Akinduyo (2017) found that peer pressure may have a role in young people's decision to cohabit.

The influence of peer socialization on cohabitation decisions can be seen in various age groups. A study by Ntloko and Kheswa (2018) found that peer pressure was the main reason why young people engage in premarital sex and cohabitation in South Africa. Similarly, a study by Temple, Adewole, and Fagbenro (2021) found that peer pressure was a significant factor in determining whether or not a young adult will cohabit.

The findings highlight the complex relationship between peer socialization and cohabitation. Peer socialization can have both positive and negative effects on an individual's decision to cohabit. While it can provide support and encouragement, it can also lead to pressure and influence an individual's decisions without considering their own values and beliefs. As such, it is essential to consider the role of peer socialization in shaping attitudes and behaviours towards cohabitation.

Table 8 shows the participants' responses regarding cohabitation to the statement: "My friends and peers typically believe that cohabitation is morally acceptable".

Table 8: Cohabitation Based on Friends' Believe that Cohabitation is Morally Acceptable

			Cohabitation behaviour		Total
			Not in favour of cohabitation	In favour of cohabitation	
My friends and peers typically believe that cohabitation is morally acceptable	Disagree	Count	13	11	24
		% within B2b. My friends and peers typically believe that cohabitation is	54.2%	45.8%	100.0%
	Neutral	Count	11	15	26
		% within B2b. My friends and peers typically believe that cohabitation is	42.3%	57.7%	100.0%
on is morally acceptable	Agree	Count	13	30	43
		% within B2b. My friends and peers typically believe that cohabitation is	30.2%	69.8%	100.0%
Total	Strongly agree	Count	1	1	2
		% within B2b. My friends and peers typically believe that cohabitation is	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
		Count	Count	57	95
		% within B2b. My friends and peers typically believe that cohabitation is	40.0%	60.0%	100.0%

Table 8 shows that among those who do not favor cohabitation, 54.2% (13) disagreed with the notion that cohabitation is morally acceptable, while 42.3% (11) were neutral, and 30.2% (13) agreed; however, only 50.0% (1) strongly agreed with the acceptance of cohabitation. Conversely, among those in favor of cohabitation, 45.8% (11) disagreed with the moral acceptance of cohabitation, whereas 57.7% (15) were neutral, 69.8% (30) agreed, and again, 50.0% (1) strongly agreed. In total, 40.0% of respondents were not in favor of cohabitation (38) compared to 60.0% in favor (57).

Peer pressure emerges as a significant influence on attitudes toward cohabitation. As indicated by several studies, including Ileoye (2018) and Kasim et al. (2018), the social environment plays a crucial role in shaping perceptions and behaviours concerning cohabitation. Young adults, often inundated with societal messages that cohabitation is a norm, may feel compelled to conform despite traditional teachings advocating for

abstinence and the sanctity of marriage. This is further illustrated by Jiya and Alhassan (2019), who found that peer norms often overshadow religious admonishments, leading young individuals to engage in cohabitation to garner social acceptance.

The duality of peer influence underscores the intricacies of social dynamics. While some peers may celebrate cohabitation as a modern rite of passage, others might caution against it due to the perceived instability of cohabiting relationships, as highlighted by warnings of high separation rates among cohabiting couples. This contradictory landscape suggests that peer networks are critical in framing not only acceptance of cohabitation but also the ongoing discourse surrounding marriage as an institution.

Table 9 shows the participants' responses regarding cohabitation to the statement: "When I decided to create a union, I was persuaded to cohabit by some of my close friends".

Table 9: When I decided to create a union, I was persuaded to cohabit by some of my close friends

			Cohabitation behaviour		
			Not in favour of cohabitation	In favour of cohabitation	Total
When I decided to create a union, I was persuaded to cohabit by some of my close friends	Strongly disagree	Count % within B2b. My friends and peers typically believe that cohabitation is	3 100.0%	0 0.0%	3 100.0%
	Disagree	Count % within B2b. My friends and peers typically believe that cohabitation is	17 51.5%	16 48.5%	33 100.0%
	Neutral	Count % within B2b. My friends and peers typically believe that cohabitation is	11 35.5%	20 64.5%	31 100.0%
	Agree	Count % within B2b. My friends and peers typically believe that cohabitation is	6 22.2%	21 77.8%	27 100.0%
	Strongly agree	Count % within B2b. My friends and peers typically believe that cohabitation is	0 0.0%	3 100.0%	3 100.0%
Total	Count % within B2b. My friends and peers typically believe that cohabitation is	37 38.1%	60 61.9%	97 100.0%	

Table 9 indicates that among those who are not in favor of cohabitation, 3 (8.1%) strongly disagreed, 17 (45.9%) disagreed, 11 (29.7%) remained neutral, and 6 (16.2%) agreed, with none strongly agreeing. In contrast, those in favor of cohabitation showed a different pattern: 0 (0.0%) strongly disagreed, 16 (26.7%) disagreed, 20 (33.3%) were neutral, 21

(35.0%) agreed, and 3 (5.0%) strongly agreed. Overall, 37 respondents (38.1%) were not in favor of cohabitation, while 60 respondents (61.9%) were in favor. There is a notable tendency among favoring participants to agree with the statement, particularly in the "agree" and "strongly agree" categories, indicating a greater openness to cohabitation influenced by friends compared to their counterparts.

The findings show that a significant majority of respondents, approximately 61.9%, expressed support for cohabitation, with only a small percentage, 38.1%, opposing it. This trend mirrors findings from contemporary studies that highlight the increasing normalization of cohabitation in society. Specifically, the results illustrate that among those who favored cohabitation, a considerable 35.0% agreed and 5.0% strongly agreed with the practice, showcasing a tendency towards acceptance that contrasts sharply with those who opposed it.

Popoola and Ayandele (2019) define cohabitation as a form of living arrangement that shares many characteristics with marriage but occurs without the formalities that the institution entails. This distinction is crucial, especially in light of the shifting dynamics surrounding marriage, which Rault and Régnier-Loilier (2020) argue is declining due to various sociocultural factors such as divorce and the rise of stepfamilies. Consequently, cohabitation emerges as an alternative arrangement that fulfills many of the inter-personal needs traditionally met through marriage.

Moreover, the findings resonate with the observation that peer influence and social networks play a pivotal role in shaping individuals' attitudes toward cohabitation. As Ileoye (2018) noted, familiarity with cohabiting individuals significantly correlates with positive attitudes toward the arrangement. In the context of the present findings, it becomes clear that those who support cohabitation may be influenced by their peers, reflecting the idea that social validation is a key component in interpersonal relationships today. This

suggests that the acceptance of cohabitation is likely buoyed by a network of peers who similarly endorse or engage in such arrangements.

Furthermore, the literature reviewed lends credence to the notion that peer pressure is a driving force behind the decision to cohabit. Young adults are often caught in a tension between traditional teachings and the prevailing social behaviours around them. Jiya and Alhassan (2019) highlight that despite the promotion of abstinence, many youths feel compelled to cohabit out of a desire for acceptance among peers. This aligns with research indicating that the sense of belonging and avoiding social ridicule can often supersede ingrained beliefs about partnership and commitment.

Table 10 shows the participants' responses regarding cohabitation to the statement: "I believe my friends' cohabiting is still acceptable".

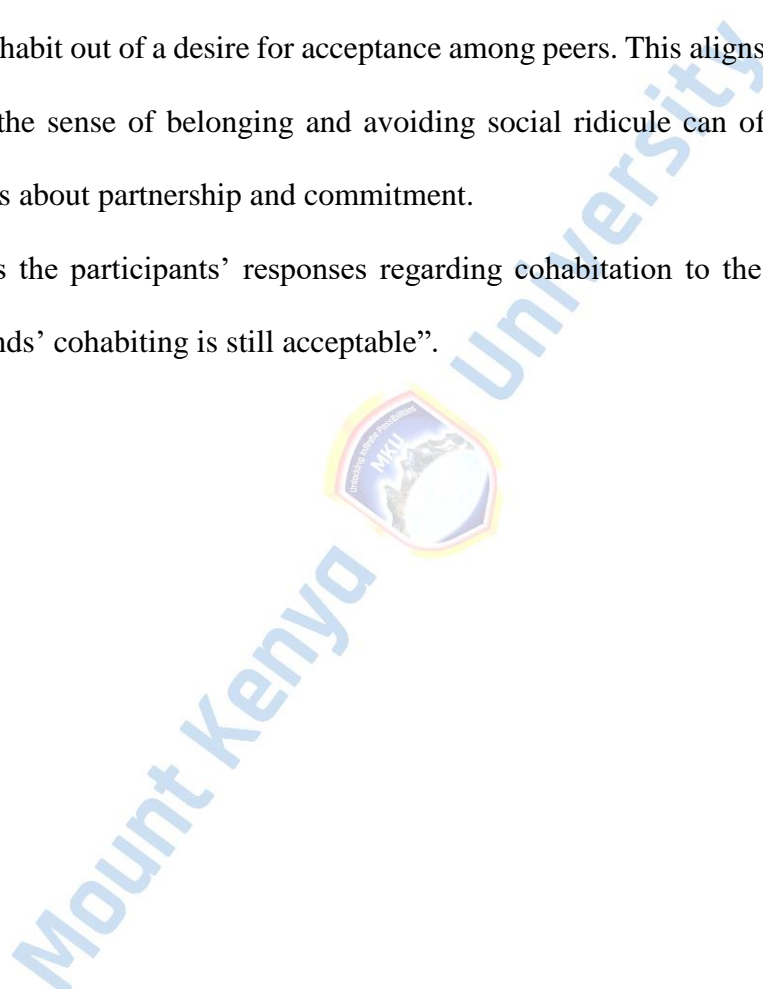


Table 10: I believe my friends' cohabiting is still acceptable

	Cohabitation Not in favour of cohabitation	behaviour In favour of cohabitation	Total
Count	1	1	2

I believe my friends cohabiting is still acceptable	Strongly disagree	% within B2b. My friends and peers typically believe that cohabitation is	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
	Disagree	Count	13	7	20
		% within B2b. My friends and peers typically believe that cohabitation is	65.0%	35.0%	100.0%
	Neutral	Count	12	20	32
		% within B2b. My friends and peers typically believe that cohabitation is	37.5%	62.5%	100.0%
Agree	Count	8	27	35	
Strongly agree	% within B2b. My friends and peers typically believe that cohabitation is	22.9%	77.1%	100.0%	
	Count	2	3	5	
Total	% within B2b. My friends and peers typically believe that cohabitation is	40.0%	60.0%	100.0%	
	Count	36	58	94	
		% within B2b. My friends and peers typically believe that cohabitation is	38.3%	61.7%	100.0%

Table 10 shows that among the 94 respondents, 36 (38.3%) are not in favor of cohabitation while 58 (61.7%) are in favor. Specifically, regarding the belief that friends cohabiting is acceptable, 2 (50.0%) strongly disagree, while 1 (50.0%) is in favor. In the "Disagree" category, of 20 respondents, 13 (65.0%) are not in favor, compared to 7 (35.0%) who are. The "Neutral" position is held by 32 participants, with 12 (37.5%) not in favor and 20 (62.5%) in favor. In the "Agree" category, 8 (22.9%) are not in favor of cohabitation, against 27 (77.1%) who are. Lastly, in the "Strongly agree" category, 2 (40.0%) are not in favor, whereas 3 (60.0%) support it. Overall, the data shows a clear leaning towards acceptance of cohabitation among the respondents.

Interestingly, the "Agree" category reveals a strong inclination toward acceptance, with 77.1% expressing favorable views toward cohabitation. This aligns with the notion highlighted by Popoola and Ayandele (2019) that the institution of marriage faces challenges from various societal changes, including high divorce rates and alternative family structures. Cohabitation, then, appears to be stepping in as a socially valid

arrangement for many, possibly seen as a "trial" period for marriage or an attractive option in itself.

Moreover, the presence of peer influence is profoundly evident throughout the findings. Citing the work of Murrira (2019), it becomes clear that peer acceptance plays a critical role in shaping attitudes toward cohabitation. Despite prevailing messages from religious and community leaders advocating for traditional marriage, young adults often succumb to the notion that "everyone does it," which reinforces cohabitation as an acceptable practice within their social circles. This phenomenon reflects findings from Jiya and Alhassan (2019), which note that peer dynamics significantly affect young adults' decisions about cohabitation, irrespective of cultural or religious teachings. The desire for peer approval can propel individuals toward behaviour that may contradict their upbringing, illustrating the powerful role of social networks in shaping relationship choices.

Also, Ileoye's (2018) research points to a correlation between social acquaintance with cohabitators and favorable attitudes toward the practice, suggesting that visibility and familiarity reduce stigma. This dovetails with the trend of increasing cohabitation among university students, as observed by Kasim, Omirin, and Okoro (2018). Their findings underscore the gradual normalization of cohabitation within academic settings, where young adults may feel culturally enabled to explore relationships outside traditional frameworks.

Table 11 shows the participants' responses regarding cohabitation to the statement: "My peers only accept people who accept their norms and that includes cohabiting".

Table 11: My peers only accept people who accept their norms and that includes cohabiting

	Cohabitation behaviour	Total
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			Not in favour of cohabitation	In favour of cohabitation	
My peers only accept people who accept their norms and that includes cohabiting	Strongly disagree	Count % within B2b. My friends and peers typically believe that cohabitation is	3 60.0%	2 40.0%	5 100.0%
	Disagree	Count % within B2b. My friends and peers typically believe that cohabitation is	9 37.5%	15 62.5%	24 100.0%
	Neutral	Count % within B2b. My friends and peers typically believe that cohabitation is	22 55.0%	18 45.0%	40 100.0%
	Agree	Count % within B2b. My friends and peers typically believe that cohabitation is	5 20.0%	20 80.0%	25 100.0%
	Strongly agree	Count % within B2b. My friends and peers typically believe that cohabitation is	0 0.0%	4 100.0%	4 100.0%
Total	Count % within B2b. My friends and peers typically believe that cohabitation is	39 39.8%	59 60.2%	98 100.0%	

Table 11 shows that a total of 98 respondents provided their opinions on the acceptance of cohabitation. Among these, 39(39.8%) were not in favor of cohabitation, while 59(60.2%) supported it. When examining the responses based on varying degrees of agreement with the statement that their peers only accept those who share their norms around cohabitation, 5(60.0%) strongly disagreed, and 2 (40.0%) agreed with the statement. For those who disagreed, 9 (37.5%) were not in favor of cohabitation, compared to 15 (62.5%) who favored it. In the neutral category, 22(55.0%) opposed cohabitation, while 18 (45.0%) accepted it. Among those who agreed, 5 (20.0%) did not support cohabitation against 20 (80.0%) who did. Lastly, in the strongly agree group, all 4 respondents (100.0%) were in

favor. Overall, the trend shows a significant inclination toward acceptance of cohabitation, especially among those who lean towards agreement with peer norms.

This study's findings resonate with the theoretical framework posited by Popoola and Ayandele (2019), who define cohabitation as a living arrangement akin to marriage without formal ties. While cohabitation is often viewed as an alternative to marriage, this research aligns with Raultn and Régnier-Loilier's (2020) observation of the declining institution of marriage and its impact on union formation. Cohabitation appears to serve as a testing ground for relationships, aligning with Boertien and Lersch's (2021) assertion that it embodies the adage "see before you leap."

Moreover, the influence of peer socialization on attitudes toward cohabitation reflects the extent to which individuals are weighing societal acceptance against traditional values. Just as Ileoye (2018) identified peer relationships as influential in shaping attitudes toward cohabitation, this survey's results reinforce the idea that peer dynamics can either normalize or stigmatize cohabiting arrangements. The modern cohabitant often navigates a landscape fraught with social pressures, where the expectations of peers clash with personal beliefs and values.

To determine the significance of these findings, a Pearson correlation was conducted at 0.05 level of significance to test the null hypothesis that there is no significant statistical difference between peer pressure and cohabitation among undergraduate students at University of Nairobi, Kenya. Results are presented in Table 12.

Table 12: Correlation between Peer Pressure and Cohabitation Behaviour

	Peer pressure	Cohabitation behaviour
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Peer pressure	Pearson	1	.294**
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.003
	N	100	100
Cohabitation behaviour	Pearson	.294**	1
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	
	N	100	100

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 12 shows a Pearson correlation analysis examining the relationship between peer pressure and cohabitation behaviour among the participants. The results indicated a significant positive correlation ($r = .294$, $n = 100$, $p = .003$) between peer pressure and cohabitation behaviour. The null hypothesis is rejected. This suggests that higher levels of peer pressure are associated with increased cohabitation behaviour. Further analysis confirmed the significance of this correlation, indicating a strong relationship at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

The findings from the Pearson correlation analysis indicating a significant positive correlation between peer pressure and cohabitation behaviour among participants can be contextualized within a broader sociocultural landscape. It is evident that as societal peer pressure increases, so does the likelihood of individuals engaging in cohabitation. This relationship between cohabitation and societal expectations becomes increasingly layered when considered against the backdrop of diminishing traditional marriage values, as noted by Raultn and Régnier-Loilier (2020). The evolving institution of marriage, marred by high divorce rates, remarriage, and shifting familial structures, has caused cohabitation to emerge not only as an alternative but also as a trial phase for many young couples. This trial phase may be influenced heavily by peer dynamics, which affect perceptions of what constitutes acceptable relationship behaviour.

Cohabiting partners often mimic marital attributes such as shared living spaces, financial interdependence, and familial responsibilities, as Boertien and Lersch (2021) suggest. These characteristics blur the lines between cohabitation and marriage, creating ambiguity in societal expectations and personal choices. Cohabitation thus acts as a form of relational testing, encapsulated in the notion of "see before you leap," as couples navigate the complexities of intimate partnerships without the commitments traditionally associated with marriage.

Peer pressure serves as a primary catalyst in shaping sexual attitudes and relational choices, as acknowledged by Murrira (2019). Indeed, even among religious young adults, social media and peer influences frequently overshadow doctrinal teachings, which often advocate for more traditional approaches to relationships, including abstinence until marriage. This phenomenon is reflective of broader societal trends, where cohabitation is increasingly normalized, even in environments historically resistant to non-marital unions. Research, such as that by Ileoye (2018), found a direct association between the familiarity with cohabiting individuals and a favorable attitude towards cohabitation itself. This suggests that social networks can significantly alter perceptions and behaviours surrounding living arrangements, highlighting the dual nature of peer impact that encourage and discourage cohabitation at various times.

4.4.2 Urban Lifestyle influence on Cohabitation Behaviour

The second objective of this study was to establish the influence of urban lifestyle on cohabitation behaviour among undergraduate students. This section aims to analyze how urban lifestyle shape students' perspectives on cohabitation. Results are presented in Table 13.

Table 13: Urban Lifestyle and Cohabitation

	Cohabitation behaviour	Total
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			Not in favour of cohabitation	In favour of cohabitation	
Urban lifestyle	Not influenced by urban lifestyle	Count	9	3	12
		% within Urban lifestyle	75.0%	25.0%	100.0%
	Undecided	Count	17	15	32
		% within Urban lifestyle	53.1%	46.9%	100.0%
	Influenced by urban lifestyle	Count	14	42	56
		% within Urban lifestyle	25.0%	75.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	40	60	100
		% within Urban lifestyle	40.0%	60.0%	100.0%

Table 13 presents data on cohabitation behaviour classified by urban lifestyle influence. Among those not influenced by urban lifestyle, 9(75.0%) are not in favor of cohabitation, while 3(25.0%) are in favor, totaling 12 respondents. For those undecided, there are 17(53.1%) against cohabitation and 15(46.9%) in favor, resulting in a total of 32. In contrast, among those influenced by urban lifestyle, 14(25.0%) do not support cohabitation, whereas a significant majority of 42(75.0%) favor it, contributing to a total of 56. Overall, the total sample consists of 100 participants, with 40 (40.0%) not in favor of cohabitation and 60 (60.0%) in favor, indicating a general preference for cohabitation among the participants.

The findings reveal a stark contrast in attitudes towards cohabitation based on urban lifestyle influence, aligning with broader socio-cultural trends observed in contemporary society. Among participants unimpacted by urban lifestyles, a substantial majority (75%) express opposition to cohabitation, while only 25% support it. This suggests that in

environments where traditional norms remain strong, cohabitation continues to be viewed unfavorably, reflecting a lingering stigma associated with non-marital arrangements.

Conversely, the data on individuals influenced by urban lifestyles presents a dramatically different picture. Here, only 25% oppose cohabitation, while a significant 75% support it. This aligns with the hypothesis that urbanization, often characterized by diverse social influences and economic challenges, fosters new attitudes toward intimate relationships. Urban environments, by virtue of their complexity and exposure to varied lifestyles, seem to facilitate a normalization of cohabitation as a legitimate and practical alternative to marriage.

The findings underscore that urban settings not only reshape individual relationship dynamics but also reflect larger socio-cultural shifts. Prior studies have pinpointed how urbanization promotes diverse relationships and non-traditional living arrangements (Cherlin, 2004). In particular, economic factors play a crucial role; young adults, especially students, might cohabit to alleviate financial burdens, enabling them to further their educational and career aspirations (Bowers et al., 2015). This reflects a pragmatic approach to relationships in urban contexts, where cohabitation is increasingly seen as a trial phase before marriage—an opportunity to measure compatibility in a real-world setting (Jamison, 2018).

These patterns also resonate with global variations in the acceptance of cohabitation. For instance, in East Asia, despite rising numbers of cohabiting couples, there is still a significant cultural resistance, where such arrangements are often viewed as mere precursors to marriage rather than legitimate partnerships in their own right (Raymo et al., 2015). This contrasts sharply with the more liberal attitudes observed in many urban settings globally.

The complexity intensifies when examining how global migration and urbanization disrupt traditional family structures, particularly in developing regions. Young people are increasingly moving from rural areas to urban centers, seeking better economic opportunities and social mobility, thus facilitating a break from conventional familial expectations (Perkins & Eroglu, 2016; Shi & Lievens, 2022). This has resulted in more flexibility regarding living arrangements, as young adults navigate their aspirations without stringent parental oversight.

In the African context, particularly within urban regions, there is a notable blending of traditional norms with modern influences that challenge the previous views on relationships and cohabitation (Akintoye & Toriola, 2020). The influence of western ideals and media has led to a shift in perceptions; urban youth see cohabitation as a reflection of independence and personal freedom, diverging from traditional views on marriage (Mavundla et al., 2015).

In light of these findings, it becomes evident that urbanization is not just a backdrop for changing forms of relationships but an active agent catalyzing shifts in cultural and social expectations around cohabitation. The considerable support for cohabitation among urban-influenced individuals underscores an evolving landscape where traditional norms are increasingly challenged by economic realities and personal aspirations, signaling a potential transformation in how society views intimate relationships moving forward.

Table 14 shows the participants' responses regarding cohabitation to the statement: "Urban lifestyle is too expensive and cohabiting is one way to cut cost".

Table 14: Urban lifestyle is too expensive and cohabiting is one way to cut cost

Cohabitation behaviour	Total
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			Not in favour of cohabitation	In favour of cohabitation	
Urban lifestyle is too expensive and cohabiting is one way to cut cost	Strongly disagree	Count	4	2	6
		% within C1. Urban lifestyle is too expensive and cohabiting is one way to cope	66.7%	33.3%	100.0%
	Disagree	Count	15	10	25
		% within C1. Urban lifestyle is too expensive and cohabiting is one way to cope	60.0%	40.0%	100.0%
	Neutral	Count	10	14	24
% within C1. Urban lifestyle is too expensive and cohabiting is one way to cope		41.7%	58.3%	100.0%	
Agree	Count	7	27	34	
	% within C1. Urban lifestyle is too expensive and cohabiting is one way to cope	20.6%	79.4%	100.0%	
Strongly agree	Count	4	5	9	
	% within C1. Urban lifestyle is too expensive and cohabiting is one way to cope	44.4%	55.6%	100.0%	
Total	Count	40	58	98	
	% within C1. Urban lifestyle is too expensive and cohabiting is one way to cope	40.8%	59.2%	100.0%	

Table 14 presents data on cohabitation behaviour in the context of urban lifestyle expenses, indicating the opinions of participants not in favor versus those in favor of cohabitation.

Among the 98 respondents, 40 (40.8%) are not in favor of cohabitation while 58 (59.2%) are in favor. Looking more closely at the responses, 6(6.1%) strongly disagree that cohabitation helps cut costs, with 4 (66.7%) of these respondents not in favor and 2 (33.3%) in favor. In the "disagree" category, 25(25.5%) responded, with 15 (60%) not in favor and 10 (40%) in favor. The "neutral" responses accounted for 24 (24.5%), with 10 (41.7%) not in favor and 14 (58.3%) in favor. A substantial 34 respondents (34.7%) agreed that cohabitation is a way to save, with 7 (20.6%) not in favor and 27 (79.4%) in favor; while 9(9.2%) strongly agreed, comprised of 4 (44.4%) not in favor and 5 (55.6%) in favor. This scenario mirrors findings from broader sociocultural literature that emphasizes how urban lifestyles globally have nurtured changing norms around cohabitation. For instance, as noted by Manning and Smock (2005), the rising acceptance of cohabitation as an alternative to marriage is increasingly evident, particularly among younger adults striving for emotional and financial support while pursuing education and career ambitions (Bowers et al., 2015). Urbanization has, thus, become a catalyst for diminishing traditional family structures, allowing for more diverse living arrangements, as echoed in Kuperberg's observations (2014) regarding local laws and cultural frameworks shaping cohabitation patterns.

The regional context further complicates perceptions of cohabitation, as cultural expectations and familial obligations manifest in different ways across the globe, from the urban centers of Africa to East Asia. In Africa, for instance, urbanization has prompted a shift in relationship dynamics, with cohabitation increasingly seen as a means of asserting independence from traditional values (Mavundla et al., 2015). Similarly, in China, rapid economic changes are altering family compositions, granting young adults greater autonomy in their partnership choices (Shi & Lievens, 2022).

Table 15 shows the participants' responses regarding cohabitation to the statement: "Urban lifestyle is sometime lonely since one is away from their family and having someone to live with solves such an issue".

Table 15: Cohabitation Behaviour Related to Urban Loneliness

			Cohabitation behaviour		Total
			Not in favour of cohabitation	In favour of cohabitation	
Urban lifestyle is sometime lonely since one is away from their family and having someone to live with solves such an issue	Strongly disagree	Count	3	1	4
		% within C1. Urban lifestyle is too expensive and cohabiting is one way to cope	75.0%	25.0%	100.0%
	Disagree	Count	7	6	13
		% within C1. Urban lifestyle is too expensive and cohabiting is one way to cope	53.8%	46.2%	100.0%
	Neutral	Count	15	16	31
		% within C1. Urban lifestyle is too expensive and cohabiting is one way to cope	48.4%	51.6%	100.0%
	Agree	Count	12	32	44
		% within C1. Urban lifestyle is too expensive and cohabiting is one way to cope	27.3%	72.7%	100.0%
	Strongly agree	Count	1	3	4
		% within C1. Urban lifestyle is too expensive and cohabiting is one way to cope	25.0%	75.0%	100.0%
Total	Count	38	58	96	
	% within C1. Urban lifestyle is too expensive and cohabiting is one way to cope	39.6%	60.4%	100.0%	

In Table 15 regarding cohabitation behaviour related to urban loneliness, a total of 96 respondents were categorized based on their attitude towards cohabitation while reflecting on the urban lifestyle. Among them, 38(39.6%) expressed that they are not in favor of cohabitation, while 58(60.4%) are in favor. Breaking down the responses further, 4 respondents (4.2%) strongly disagreed with the notion, consisting of 3 (75.0%) who are not in favor and 1 (25.0%) who is in favor. In the "disagree" category, 13 respondents (13.5%) participated, with 7 (53.8%) against and 6 (46.2%) in favor. The neutral stance was held by 31 respondents (32.3%), with a near equal division of 15 (48.4%) against and 16 (51.6%) for cohabitation. Notably, the "agree" category had the largest proportion with

44 respondents (45.8%), where 12 (27.3%) are not in favor, and 32 (72.7%) support cohabitation. Lastly, in the "strongly agree" category, 4 respondents (4.2%) gave their opinions, consisting of 1 (25.0%) against and 3 (75.0%) in favor.

These findings resonate with existing literature that underscores the transformation of socio-cultural norms in urban contexts. As urban lifestyles evolve, economic pressures, educational aspirations, and changing cultural frameworks increasingly influence personal relationships. Research indicates a strong correlation between urban living and the acceptance of non-traditional arrangements, including cohabitation, particularly among young adults. The convenience of shared living, both as a financial strategy and a means of compatibility assessment, reinforces the trend toward cohabitation (Jamison, 2018).

This shift is especially pronounced among young adults who are often navigating the pressures of urban life, such as high living costs and the need for emotional and financial support. In many cities, cohabitation has transitioned from stigma to normalization, aligning with findings from global studies. Particularly in economically diverse urban settings, cohabitation is increasingly viewed as both a practical and a socially accepted choice.

However, the landscape of urban cohabitation is multifaceted, shaped by regional contexts and cultural nuances. For instance, while cohabitation is being embraced more widely in urban areas of the global North, in regions like East Asia, traditional views on marriage still dominate, rendering cohabitation a precursor rather than an alternative to marriage (Raymo et al., 2015). This disparity illustrates the significance of local laws, cultural expectations, and family dynamics in shaping attitudes toward cohabitation.

Furthermore, as urban migration patterns evolve, new dynamics emerge within family structures. Large numbers of recent immigrants contribute to urban diversity, resulting in varied cohabitation behaviours influenced by their unique backgrounds (Perkins & Eroglu,

2016). The relationship between migration and urban cohabitation showcases how traditional family residences are transformed in urban contexts, with young adults increasingly opting for independent, non-traditional living arrangements that align with their personal aspirations and lifestyles.

In the African context, these findings resonate with urban experiences that blend modern challenges and traditional values. Young adults in cities like Nairobi view cohabitation as a strategic response to economic realities, reflecting a transformative shift influenced by global media and changing perceptions of personal freedom and independence (Akintoye & Toriola, 2020). Here, economic factors often drive students to cohabit, as they seek to navigate the dual pressures of educational commitments and rising living costs.

Table 16 shows the participants' responses regarding cohabitation to the statement: "I cohabit because the urban lifestyle makes it easier to cohabit because there are no traditions that govern such relationships unlike in the rural areas".

Table 16: I cohabit because the urban lifestyle makes it easier to cohabit because there are no traditions that govern such relationships unlike in the rural areas

Count	Cohabitation behaviour		Total
	Not in favour of cohabitation	In favour of cohabitation	
	4	0	4

I cohabit because the urban lifestyle makes it easier to cohabit because there are no traditions that govern such relationships unlike in the rural areas	Strongly disagree	% within C3. I cohabit because the urban lifestyle makes it easier to cohabit	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	disagree	Count	14	10	24
		% within C3. I cohabit because the urban lifestyle makes it easier to cohabit	58.3%	41.7%	100.0%
	Neutral	Count	12	8	20
		% within C3. I cohabit because the urban lifestyle makes it easier to cohabit	60.0%	40.0%	100.0%
	Agree	Count	7	36	43
		% within C3. I cohabit because the urban lifestyle makes it easier to cohabit	16.3%	83.7%	100.0%
	Strongly agree	Count	1	5	6
Total		% within C3. I cohabit because the urban lifestyle makes it easier to cohabit	16.7%	83.3%	100.0%
		Count	38	59	97
		% within C3. I cohabit because the urban lifestyle makes it easier to cohabit	39.2%	60.8%	100.0%

Table 16 summarizes responses regarding cohabitation behaviour in relation to the urban lifestyle, with a total of 97 participants. Among them, 38 (39.2%) are not in favor of cohabitation while 59 (60.8%) are in favor. In the "Strongly disagree" category, there are 4 participants (100.0%) who do not favor cohabitation, whereas no one (0.0%) in this group supports it. In the "Disagree" category, 14 individuals (58.3%) are against cohabitation and 10 (41.7%) support it. The "Neutral" responses consist of 12 (60.0%) not favoring and 8 (40.0%) in favor of cohabitation. Among those who "Agree," 7 (16.3%) are not in favor, contrasted by a significant majority of 36 individuals (83.7%) favoring it. Lastly, in the "Strongly agree" category, 1 participant (16.7%) does not support cohabitation, while 5 individuals (83.3%) do. Overall, these figures illustrate a predominance of support (60.8%) for cohabitation, highlighting a strong association with the urban lifestyle, while a smaller subset (39.2%) remains opposed.

These responses can be further understood through the lens of urban lifestyles that facilitate diverse social interactions and relationship structures. Economic pressures, particularly in urban environments, have prompted many young individuals, including

college students, to view cohabitation as a pragmatic and strategic alternative to marriage. Research has shown that urbanization often leads to diverse living arrangements, propelled by opportunities for education and career advancement (Cherlin, 2004; Bowers et al., 2015). In urban centers, where the cost of living can be prohibitive, cohabitation not only serves as a means of emotional support but also offers financial relief. Students in the University of Nairobi exhibits similar patterns. Here, students have increasingly adopted cohabitation as a viable lifestyle choice, influenced by rising living costs and shifting societal expectations (Luvanda, 2021). The finding that 36 of the respondents in the "Agree" category support cohabitation aligns with observations in other urban contexts, where changing perceptions led many young people to regard cohabitation as a legitimate precursor to marriage rather than a deterrent (Okech, 2019).

While economic factors play a significant role in shaping these attitudes, it is also imperative to consider the cultural and sociological shifts at play. Urban environments, as observed in various global contexts, tend to weaken traditional family structures, providing room for alternative arrangements that resist historical norms (Lesthaeghe, 2010; Kuperberg, 2019). In many societies, especially in developing regions, the legacy of migration and urbanization complicates family dynamics, further reinforcing the shift towards cohabitation as a normative practice. However, it is essential to note that the acceptance of cohabitation is not uniform across all contexts. For instance, the data suggests that despite the urban influence, cultural attitudes towards cohabitation in East Asia and Africa remain mixed; while urbanization accelerates instances of cohabitation, traditional views still wield significant influence, especially in places with strong family expectations (Raymo et al., 2015).

Table 17 shows the participants' responses regarding cohabitation to the statement: "I cohabit with my partner because we both need the physical affection that comes with it".

Table 17: I cohabit with my partner because we both need the physical affection that comes with it

			Cohabitation behaviour		
			Not in favour of cohabitation	In favour of cohabitation	Total
I cohabit with my partner because we both need the physical affection that comes with it	Strongly disagree	Count % within C4. I cohabit with my partner because we both need the physical connection	2 100.0%	0 0.0%	2 100.0%
	Disagree	Count % within C4. I cohabit with my partner because we both need the physical connection	14 82.4%	3 17.6%	17 100.0%
	Neutral	Count % within C4. I cohabit with my partner because we both need the physical connection	11 37.9%	18 62.1%	29 100.0%
	Agree	Count % within C4. I cohabit with my partner because we both need the physical connection	11 23.4%	36 76.6%	47 100.0%
	Strongly agree	Count % within C4. I cohabit with my partner because we both need the physical connection	2 50.0%	2 50.0%	4 100.0%
Total	Count % within C4. I cohabit with my partner because we both need the physical connection	40 40.4%	59 59.6%	99 100.0%	

Table 17 illustrates responses regarding cohabitation behaviour among 99 participants, divided into those not in favor (40 participants) and those in favor (59 participants) of cohabitation. In the "Strongly disagree" category, all 2 respondents are not in favor, constituting 100.0% of that subgroup. In the "Disagree" category, 14 participants (82.4%) are not in favor, while 3 (17.6%) are in favor. A total of 29 participants are neutral, with 11 (37.9%) not in favor and 18 (62.1%) in favor. In the "Agree" category, 11 participants (23.4%) are not in favor, contrasting with 36 (76.6%) who are in favor. Lastly, in the "Strongly agree" category, both participants are split evenly, with 2 in each subgroup

(50.0% each). In summary, the data reveals that 40.4% of respondents are not in favor of cohabitation, while a majority, 59.6%, express favor towards it.

These findings reveal varying levels of acceptance across different categories of agreement, suggesting that while a majority lean toward cohabitation, significant resistance still exists. For instance, the stark contrast between the "Strongly disagree" and "Agree" categories illustrates differing levels of endorsement, with the latter showcasing a notable majority favoring cohabitation while the former is dominated by those against it. This division echoes broader societal trends observed globally, particularly in urban contexts, where socio-cultural norms around relationships are rapidly evolving.

Urbanization appears to be a critical driver of these shifting dynamics. As noted in various studies, including those by Manning and Smock (2005), and Cherlin (2004), urban settings cultivate diversity in interpersonal relationships due to exposure to different social influences and shifting economic realities. The increasing normalization of cohabitation, once a stigmatized arrangement, aligns with findings that highlight changes in attitudes among young adults, especially in economically thriving urban areas. Such settings provide opportunities for young individuals to enter non-traditional living arrangements that offer both emotional and financial support, especially in light of educational pursuits and career ambitions.

The economic implications of urban life further complicate cohabitation behaviour. As echoed by Jamison (2018), many young adults see cohabitation as a pragmatic approach to measuring compatibility. This is indicative of a shift where living together is regarded as a serious commitment rather than merely a trial period. The economic motivations are particularly relevant among college students, with many opting to cohabit to alleviate the financial burdens of urban living. In this context, the data suggesting that 40.4% of respondents oppose cohabitation highlights a tussle between emerging modern values and

more traditional expectations, particularly in areas where family structures and norms remain more conservative.

Cohabitation trends tend to differ significantly between global regions. For instance, in East Asia, cultural norms still heavily influence cohabitation practices, often viewing them as a precursor to marriage rather than an alternative lifestyle (Raymo et al., 2015). On the other hand, migration patterns further disrupt traditional family structures, as seen in Africa, where urban environments face newly emerging challenges in reconciling traditional views with modern, urban lifestyles (Akintoye & Toriola, 2020). This dichotomy reflects a broader narrative about the impact of urbanization on relationship dynamics globally, revealing how exposure to diverse cultural norms can foster different perceptions of shared living arrangements.

Table 18 shows the participants’ responses regarding cohabitation to the statement: “Urban lifestyle supports cohabitation because there is adoption of the western culture which mainly supports cohabitation relationships”.

Table 18: Urban lifestyle supports cohabitation because there is adoption of the western culture which mainly supports cohabitation relationships

	Cohabitation behaviour		Total
	Not in favour of cohabitation	In favour of cohabitation	
Count	5	2	7

Urban lifestyle supports cohabitation because there is adoption of the western culture which mainly supports cohabitation relationships	Strongly disagree	% within C5. Urban lifestyle supports cohabitation because there is adoption of new social norms	71.4%	28.6%	100.0%
	Disagree	Count	13	2	15
		% within C5. Urban lifestyle supports cohabitation because there is adoption of new social norms	86.7%	13.3%	100.0%
	Neutral	Count	12	16	28
		% within C5. Urban lifestyle supports cohabitation because there is adoption of new social norms	42.9%	57.1%	100.0%
Agree	Count	8	29	37	
	% within C5. Urban lifestyle supports cohabitation because there is adoption of new social norms	21.6%	78.4%	100.0%	
Strongly agree	Count	1	7	8	
	% within C5. Urban lifestyle supports cohabitation because there is adoption of new social norms	12.5%	87.5%	100.0%	
Total	Count	Count	56	95	
	% within C5. Urban lifestyle supports cohabitation because there is adoption of new social norms	41.1%	58.9%	100.0%	

In Table 18 regarding cohabitation behaviour, a total of 95 respondents shared their views on urban lifestyle support for cohabitation due to the influence of Western culture. Among these, 39 (41.1%) are not in favor of cohabitation, while 56(58.9%) are in favor. Breaking down the responses for those against cohabitation, 5 (71.4%) strongly disagree, and 13 (86.7%) disagree, translating into a strong trend of disapproval. In contrast, for those in favor, there is a notable increase in both agreement levels; 29 (78.4%) agree, and 7 (87.5%) strongly agree. The neutral category reflects a balanced viewpoint, with 12 (42.9%) remaining neutral against 16 (57.1%) who favor cohabitation.

The findings detailed in Table 19 focus on the responses of 95 urban respondents regarding their views on cohabitation, revealing a nuanced landscape of opinions shaped significantly by the influence of Western culture. With 58.9% of respondents in favor of cohabitation and 41.1% against it, the data reflects a prevailing trend towards acceptance

of this once-stigmatized lifestyle choice, resonating with broader shifts elucidated in existing sociocultural research.

Among the respondents who oppose cohabitation, a substantial portion expressed strong disapproval (71.4%) strongly disagreeing and 86.7% disagreeing with the notion of cohabitation. This indicates a firm adherence to traditional views by a notable segment of the population, echoing the ongoing tension between modern urban pressures and entrenched cultural values. Conversely, those in favor of cohabitation showcase significant levels of agreement with the concept (78.4% agreeing and 87.5% strongly agreeing). This dichotomy highlights the dynamic interplay between conservatism and modernity, a common theme in urban settings where Western influences have permeated local customs. As established in the broader discourse on urban lifestyles, the normalization of cohabitation within cities is often a result of complex socio-economic dynamics. Urban environments serve as incubators for diverse relationships, where young adults are exposed to alternative living arrangements due to economic realities, cultural shifts, and social constructs. Prior literature emphasizes how urbanization enables a departure from conventional family structures, allowing individuals the freedom to explore cohabitation as a legitimate alternative to marriage (Manning & Smock, 2005; Cherlin, 2004).

The findings resonate with other urban contexts, such as in East Asia and Africa, where the perception of cohabitation is evolving amid global influences. In East Asia, for instance, while cohabitation is gaining traction, the enduring cultural stigmas surrounding non-marital unions mean that these relationships are often seen merely as precursors to marriage (Raymo et al., 2015). Similarly, in Africa, a blend of traditional and modern influences shapes cohabitation behaviours, where urban youth increasingly view the arrangement as a reflection of personal freedom and independence (Mavundla et al., 2015; Akintoye & Toriola, 2020).

Economic pressures play a pivotal role in these dynamics, particularly in urban settings where living costs soar. Much like findings from various regions, the data suggests that college students engage in cohabitation as a strategy to alleviate financial burdens (Bowers et al., 2015; Mokhoma & Modise, 2018). Cohabitation emerges not only as a measure of compatibility but also as a practical response to the realities of urban life, where traditional paths to adulthood and family formation are increasingly challenged.

Moreover, the dissimilarities in cohabitation trends between regions further illuminate the complexity of these behaviours. In the global South, for instance, local culture, family expectations, and legislative frameworks create distinct pathways for how cohabitation is perceived and practiced. The fragmentation of family structures, exacerbated by migration and urbanization, leads to variations in household compositions and living arrangements (Kuperberg, 2019; Dube, 2019).

To determine the significance of these findings, a Pearson correlation was conducted at 0.05 level of significance to test the null hypothesis that there is no significant statistical difference between urban lifestyle and cohabitation among undergraduate students at University of Nairobi, Kenya. Results are presented in Table 19.

Table 19: Correlation between Urban Lifestyle and Cohabitation Behaviour

		Urban lifestyle	Cohabitation behaviour
Urban lifestyle	Pearson Correlation	1	.369**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
Cohabitation behaviour	Pearson Correlation	.369**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 19 shows a Pearson correlation analysis conducted to assess the relationship between urban lifestyle and cohabitation behaviour. The results indicate a significant positive correlation between urban lifestyle and cohabitation behaviour, $r(98) = .369, p < .01$. This

suggests that as urban lifestyle increases, cohabitation behaviour tends to also increase. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

The findings from the Pearson correlation analysis linking urban lifestyle to cohabitation behaviour reveal a noteworthy dynamic reflective of broader socio-cultural shifts occurring in urban environments. The significant positive correlation identified: where an increase in urban lifestyle aligns with a rise in cohabitation behaviour ($r(98) = .369, p < .01$) suggests that as individuals immerse themselves in urban settings, they increasingly engage in cohabitation as a normative practice. This pattern can be understood within the context of the various transformations that urbanization is driving globally, particularly among young adults.

Historically, cohabitation has been viewed through a lens of stigma, often associated with a departure from traditional family structures and values. However, as noted in the analysis, this stigma is waning, especially in urban contexts where socio-economic factors, cultural dynamics, and diverse social influences converge. Urban lifestyles often foster an environment conducive to alternative living arrangements, where conventional norms surrounding marriage are challenged. The findings affirm existing literature that suggests urban settings dramatically reshape intimate relationships and societal expectations (Manning & Smock, 2005; Cherlin, 2004).

In this light, economic concerns are frequently cited as a driving force behind cohabitation, particularly for young adults in urban settings. As students and early career professionals seek to manage financial pressures, cohabitation emerges as a practical solution, allowing individuals to share living costs while simultaneously exploring compatibility with partners. The research suggests that this practical consideration aligns with the growing perception of cohabitation as a legitimate lifestyle choice rather than merely a precursor to marriage (Jamison, 2018).

Moreover, the rapid pace of urbanization introduces a shifting landscape of family structures and expectations. As highlighted in the findings, regions exhibiting significant urban migration witness a reconfiguration of familial arrangements. Young individuals, especially in diverse urban environments, experience a loosening of traditional ties that had previously governed their relationship choices, allowing for greater autonomy and flexibility in cohabitation decisions (Shi & Lievens, 2022; Kuperberg, 2014).

Yet, it's crucial to recognize that these trends are not uniform across global contexts. Regional variations illuminate the complex interplay between local cultural norms, legal frameworks, and family expectations. In East Asian contexts, for instance, cohabitation remains largely seen as a precursor to marriage, shaped by deep-rooted cultural attitudes that still favor traditional unions despite growing urbanization (Raymo et al., 2015). Conversely, in many African contexts, urbanization has led to a subtle redefinition of cohabitation, fostering independence and altering perceptions of relationships significantly among the youth (Akintoye & Toriola, 2020; Mavundla et al., 2015).

In Kenya, where recent research reflects a shift in attitude among university students, cohabitation is increasingly accepted as a pragmatic choice, influenced by the realities of urban living. This suggests a generational change in attitudes towards relationships, where traditional norms are reassessed in light of modern aspirations and economic factors (Luvanda, 2021; Njuguna, 2018).

4.4.3 Influence of self-concept on cohabitation behaviour

The perception students hold of themselves, including their beliefs, attitudes, and feelings about their abilities and worth plays a critical role in the choices they make regarding relationships and cohabitation. The third objective was to determine the influence of self-

concept on cohabitation behaviour among undergraduate students. Results are presented in Table 20.

Table 20: Self-concept and Perception

			Cohabitation behaviour		Total
			Not in favour of cohabitation	In favour of cohabitation	
self-concept	Low self-concept	Count	6	14	20
		% within self-concept	30.0%	70.0%	100.0%
	Moderate self-concept	Count	13	22	35
		% within self-concept	37.1%	62.9%	100.0%
	High-self-concept	Count	5	10	15
		% within self-concept	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%
	Very high self-concept	Count	16	14	30
		% within self-concept	53.3%	46.7%	100.0%
Total	Count		40	60	100
	% within self-concept		40.0%	60.0%	100.0%

Table 20 presents data on cohabitation behaviour categorized by self-concept levels among a total of 100 respondents. Among those with a low self-concept, 6(30.0%) are not in favor of cohabitation, while 14 (70.0%) are in favor. In the moderate self-concept group, 13 (37.1%) oppose cohabitation, compared to 22 (62.9%) who support it. For those with a high self-concept, 5(33.3%) do not favor cohabitation, and 10 (66.7%) do. Notably, in the very high self-concept category, a majority of 16(53.3%) are not in favor, whereas 14 (46.7%) are in favor. In summary, across all groups, 40(40.0%) are not in favor of cohabitation, while 60 (60.0%) support it.

Findings show that respondents with low self-concept exhibited a greater propensity to favor cohabitation, with 70% in support of this living arrangement. Conversely, those classified as having a very high self-concept indicated a significant opposition to

cohabitation, with 53.3% not in favor. This trend suggests a complex relationship between self-concept clarity and willingness to engage in cohabiting relationships. As posited by Zeigler-Hill and Shackelford (2020), self-concepts are not monolithic; rather, they are dynamic and evolve through social interactions and individual experiences. The openness to cohabitation among individuals with low self-concept may stem from a desire for validation or companionship, creating a reliance on external relationships to reinforce their self-identity.

In contrast, individuals with very high self-concept may possess a stronger sense of independence or self-definition that leads them to view cohabitation as potentially compromising to their self-identity. This aligns with previous findings suggesting that those with higher self-concept clarity often exhibit more stable identities that are less reliant on external validation. The nuances of these relationships reveal how self-concept can act as a mediating factor in decision-making regarding close relationships, reinforcing the idea that self-perception directly influences life choices.

Moreover, the relationship between self-concept and cohabitation could be further explored through the lens of commitment and relationship quality. As noted in existing literature, individuals displaying higher self-concept clarity often experience better relationship functioning, heightened satisfaction, and deeper commitment levels (Slotter & Gardner, 2012). The inclination observed in the data towards cohabitation among those with lower self-concept levels underscores a potential vulnerability in their identities; individuals may integrate their partners' identities into their own to cultivate a sense of intimacy (Tajmirriyahi & Ickes, 2020). Therefore, while these partnerships can foster connection, they may also carry risks, particularly if they end, potentially leading to identity confusion or instability, reaffirming the importance of maintaining a distinct and stable self-concept separate from one's partner.

Table 21 shows the participants' responses regarding cohabitation to the statement: "I feel proud of who I am and what I have accomplished".

Table 21: I feel proud of who I am and what I have accomplished

			Cohabitation behaviour		
			Not in favour of cohabitation	In favour of cohabitation	Total
I feel proud of who I am and what I have accomplished	Strongly disagree	Count % within I feel proud of who I am and what I have accomplished	5 55.6%	4 44.4%	9 100.0%
	Disagree	Count % within I feel proud of who I am and what I have accomplished	1 25.0%	3 75.0%	4 100.0%
	Neutral	Count % within I feel proud of who I am and what I have accomplished	1 16.7%	5 83.3%	6 100.0%
	Agree	Count % within I feel proud of who I am and what I have accomplished	19 35.8%	34 64.2%	53 100.0%
	Strongly agree	Count % within I feel proud of who I am and what I have accomplished	14 50.0%	14 50.0%	28 100.0%
Total	Count % within I feel proud of who I am and what I have accomplished	40 40.0%	60 60.0%	100 100.0%	

Table 21 presents data on participants' cohabitation behaviour in relation to their feelings of pride in their accomplishments. Among those "Not in favour of cohabitation," 5 participants (55.6%) strongly disagree with feeling proud, whereas 1 participant (25.0%) disagrees, 1 participant (16.7%) remains neutral, 19 participants (35.8%) agree, and 14 participants (50.0%) strongly agree. In contrast, among those "In favour of cohabitation," 4 participants (44.4%) strongly disagree with feeling proud, while 3 participants (75.0%) disagree, 5 participants (83.3%) are neutral, 34 participants (64.2%) agree, and 14

participants (50.0%) strongly agree. In summary, out of 100 total respondents, 40 are not in favour of cohabitation (40%) and 60 are in favour (60%), with the majority expressing varying degrees of agreement regarding their pride in their accomplishments, particularly skewed towards agreement among those in favour of cohabitation.

The findings from Table 21 highlight an intriguing relationship between participants' cohabitation behaviour and their feelings of pride in their accomplishments. Notably, a deeper examination reveals significant divergences in the views of individuals who are "not in favor" versus those "in favor" of cohabitation. Among those not in favor, a majority (55.6%) reported strongly disagreeing with the sentiment of feeling proud of their accomplishments. This suggests a potential correlation between their views on cohabitation and their self-worth or self-evaluation. In essence, their resistance to cohabitation could reflect broader undercurrents of dissatisfaction or a lack of clarity in their self-concept.

In contrast, individuals in favor of cohabitation exhibit a more favorable self-assessment concerning their achievements. The data indicates that a significant portion (50%) of this group strongly agrees with feelings of pride, alongside a noteworthy majority expressing agreement overall. This disparity raises questions about how the decision to cohabit can influence one's self-concept. When viewed through the lens of self-concept theory, as elucidated by Zeigler-Hill and Shackelford (2020), it becomes evident that the self-concept is not a static entity but a dynamic amalgamation influenced by personal and social contexts. The inclination towards cohabitation among the latter group may serve as a conduit for enhancing their self-concept clarity, thereby reflecting positively on their self-evaluations and feelings of pride.

Moreover, the evidence indicates that self-concept clarity plays a significant role in relationship dynamics. Those in cohabiting relationships may have identities that evolve

and adapt through their partnership, thereby incorporating partner traits into their self-concept. This phenomenon highlights the inherent flexibility of identity in cohabitation. Slotter and Gardner (2012) articulate that individuals with higher attachment anxiety may pursue intimacy more fervently within cohabiting partnerships, suggesting that their self-concepts become further malleable in pursuit of closeness. Thus, this dynamic interplay might explain the stronger feelings of pride reported by individuals in favor of cohabitation; perhaps their experiences and values are more closely aligned with their partners, facilitating a positive self-appraisal.

Additionally, clarity within one’s self-concept has been positively linked to relationship quality. Self-concept clarity facilitates effective communication and self-disclosure, which can reinforce relational satisfaction and commitment. This may particularly resonate with the findings of Tajmirriyahi and Ickes (2020), who assert that individuals with clearer self-concepts are more adept at sharing their authentic selves within relationships. As those in favor of cohabitation often express higher pride in their accomplishments, their experience of clear self-concept could serve as a bedrock for sharing and fostering deeper connections. Table 22 shows the participants’ responses regarding cohabitation to the statement: “I often find a sense of belonging and connection with my social groups”.

Table 22: I often find a sense of belonging and connection with my social groups

			Cohabitation behaviour		
			Not in favour of cohabitation	In favour of cohabitation	Total
I often find a sense of belonging and connection with my social groups	Strongly disagree	Count	5	14	19
		% within I often find a sense of belonging and connection with my social groups	26.3%	73.7%	100.0%
	Disagree	Count	13	28	41

		% within I often find a sense of belonging and connection with my social groups	31.7%	68.3%	100.0%
	Neutral	Count	10	4	14
		% within I often find a sense of belonging and connection with my social groups	71.4%	28.6%	100.0%
	Agree	Count	7	7	14
		% within I often find a sense of belonging and connection with my social groups	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
	Strongly agree	Count	5	7	12
		% within I often find a sense of belonging and connection with my social groups	41.7%	58.3%	100.0%
Total		Count	40	60	100
		% within I often find a sense of belonging and connection with my social groups	40.0%	60.0%	100.0%

Table 22 presents the cohabitation behaviour of participants based on their sense of belonging and connection with social groups. Among the participants, a total of 100 individuals were surveyed, with 40 (40.0%) not in favor of cohabitation and 60 (60.0%) in favor. Specifically, among those who strongly disagree that they find a sense of belonging, 5 are not in favor (26.3%) and 14 are in favor (73.7%). In contrast, 13 not in favor and 28 in favor (31.7% and 68.3%, respectively) expressed disagreement. Those who remained neutral had 10 individuals against cohabitation (71.4%) compared to only 4 in favor (28.6%). For those agreeing, 7 individuals (50.0%) were not in favor, while an equal number (50.0%) supported cohabitation. Among the strong supporters, 5 are against cohabitation (41.7%) and 7 are in favor (58.3%). In summary, the figures highlight a significant inclination towards favoring cohabitation (60.0%) among those who feel a sense of belonging and connection within their social groups.

These findings provide a comprehensive insight into the cohabitation preferences of participants based on their sense of belonging and connection to social groups. Out of a

total of 100 individuals surveyed, a predominant 60% expressed favorable attitudes toward cohabitation. This trend notably varies across different levels of perceived belonging, revealing a clear relationship between self-concept and social engagement.

Among the participants who strongly disagreed with feeling a sense of belonging, 73.7% were in favor of cohabitation, indicating a potential disconnect between their perceived social isolation and their willingness to engage in cohabitation. This might suggest that individuals who struggle with feelings of belonging may still seek connection through living arrangements, possibly as a means to enhance their social support or counteract feelings of loneliness.

Conversely, those who simply disagreed with the sense of belonging displayed a slightly greater resistance to cohabitation, with 31.7% not in favor. This pattern may reflect a more stable self-concept where individuals have clearer self-perceptions and expectations around relationships, potentially informed by their social contexts. In both the neutral and agreement groups regarding a sense of belonging, similar trends appeared, with a notable number of participants favoring cohabitation despite mixed feelings about their connections with social groups.

The findings resonate with the theoretical framework presented by Zeigler-Hill and Shackelford (2020) regarding the dynamic nature of self-concept. As the self-concept consists of evolving self-models shaped by social interactions and personal experiences, the preferences for cohabitation documented in the survey hint at how these constructs inform relationship behaviours. Individuals with a clearer self-concept may be better equipped to navigate cohabitation decisions, demonstrating a correlation with relationship quality and engagement mentioned in the literature.

Furthermore, the insights into the role of self-concept clarity in relationship functioning emphasize the importance of understanding one's identity in the context of romantic

partnerships. Slotter and Gardner's (2012) findings on attachment anxiety suggest that those seeking closeness may exhibit greater variability in their self-concept during cohabitation. This reaffirms the notion that cohabiting relationships are not only about shared living arrangements but also about identity formation and intimacy, which can significantly influence preferences toward cohabitation.

Table 23 shows the participants' responses regarding cohabitation to the statement: "I make decisions based on my core values and beliefs".

Table 23: I make decisions based on my core values and beliefs

		Cohabitation behaviour			
		Not in favour of cohabitation	In favour of cohabitation	Total	
I make decisions based on my core values and beliefs	Strongly disagree	Count % within I make decisions based on my core values and beliefs	7 28.0%	18 72.0%	25 100.0%
	Disagree	Count % within I make decisions based on my core values and beliefs	15 39.5%	23 60.5%	38 100.0%
	Neutral	Count % within I make decisions based on my core values and beliefs	5 55.6%	4 44.4%	9 100.0%
	Agree	Count % within I make decisions based on my core values and beliefs	8 44.4%	10 55.6%	18 100.0%
	Strongly agree	Count % within I make decisions based on my core values and beliefs	5 50.0%	5 50.0%	10 100.0%
Total	Count % within I make decisions based on my core values and beliefs	40 40.0%	60 60.0%	100 100.0%	

In Table 23 examining cohabitation behaviour based on decision-making related to core values and beliefs, a total of 100 respondents were categorized into two groups: those not in favor of cohabitation (40, accounting for 40.0%) and those in favor (60, representing 60.0%). Among those not in favor, 7 strongly disagreed with making decisions based on core values (28.0%), while 18 on the opposite spectrum strongly agreed (72.0%). The disagreement context shows that 15 respondents disagreed (39.5%), whereas 23 agreed

(60.5%), with a neutral stance taken by 5 (55.6% neutral and 44.4% in favor). In the agree category, 8 (44.4%) were not in favor, and 10 (55.6%) were in favor. Within the strongly agree group, 5 were not in favor (50.0%) and 5 were in favor (50.0%). In summary, 40% of respondents expressed they are not in favor of cohabitation, while 60% indicated they are in favor, reflecting a significant inclination towards favoring cohabitation among those who align their decisions with their core values and beliefs.

The findings offer an intriguing glimpse into the dynamics of cohabitation behaviour as influenced by respondents' core values and beliefs. A total of 100 individuals participated in this examination, revealing a notable predisposition towards cohabitation, with 60% expressing support for it, while 40% were against. This disparity in attitudes highlights significant variances in how personal convictions shape relationship choices.

Within the subgroup that opposed cohabitation, a dichotomy emerged regarding the role of core values in decision-making. Many (72%) strongly agreed with the relevance of personal values, while only 28% strongly disagreed. This trend is reflective of a broader context where personal agency and belief systems interplay with relationship dynamics. Those who fundamentally disagree may operate under self-concepts influenced by traditional norms or personal histories that oppose cohabitation. In contrast, the 72% agreement suggests a more fluid and adaptable self-concept among those in favor, who likely align their cohabitation choices with their evolving beliefs and values.

Evidently, there is a significant divergence in the degree to which respondents identify their decision-making with their self-concept. For instance, among those who disagreed with the tradition but still favored cohabitation, approximately 44% found themselves entrenched against it, while 55.6% favored it, indicating a nuanced internal struggle that echoes the findings of Zeigler-Hill and Shackelford. Their research highlights how self-

concepts are not fixed; rather, they are multi-layered and dynamic, molded by experiences and societal conditions.

Incorporating the literature, it becomes apparent that respondents' self-concept clarity plays a critical role in determining their willingness to cohabit. Self-concept clarity, defined as the degree to which an individual's self-beliefs are clearly defined and stable, may provide insight into the motivations behind cohabitation behaviours. According to earlier studies referenced, individuals with high self-concept clarity tend to exhibit better relationship functioning and higher satisfaction levels.

The findings suggest that individuals who embrace cohabitation align their decisions closely with a clear understanding of their values and beliefs, reflecting an adaptable self-concept shaped by both personal desires and social influences. This flexibility is particularly important in romantic partnerships where the lines between self-concept and partner influence blur. Slotter and Gardner's (2012) work on the relationship between attachment anxiety and intimacy points out that those with higher anxiety seek closeness more intensely, indicating that their self-concepts may be even more fluid. This adaptability is crucial in cohabiting relationships, where partners often intertwine their identities and self-perceptions.

Moreover, the consideration of significant-other-concept coherence offers an additional layer of understanding. Those participants who are more actively engaged in assessing their partner's self-concept may find that their relationship aligns more favorably with their own self-views, leading to enhanced satisfaction and commitment.

Table 24 shows the participants' responses regarding cohabitation to the statement: "I believe that I am as good as others in most aspects of my life".

Table 24: I believe that I am as good as others in most aspects of my life

	Cohabitation behaviour	Total
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			Not in		
			favour of	In favour of	
			cohabitation	cohabitation	
I believe that I am as good as others in most aspects of my life	Strongly disagree	Count	3	6	9
		% within I believe that I am as good as others in most aspects of my life	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%
	Disagree	Count	5	9	14
		% within I believe that I am as good as others in most aspects of my life	35.7%	64.3%	100.0%
	Neutral	Count	3	3	6
% within I believe that I am as good as others in most aspects of my life		50.0%	50.0%	100.0%	
Agree	Count	16	21	37	
	% within I believe that I am as good as others in most aspects of my life	43.2%	56.8%	100.0%	
Strongly agree	Count	13	21	34	
	% within I believe that I am as good as others in most aspects of my life	38.2%	61.8%	100.0%	
Total	Count		40	60	100
	% within I believe that I am as good as others in most aspects of my life		40.0%	60.0%	100.0%

Table 24 presents data on cohabitation behaviour segmented by perceptions of self-worth.

Among those who strongly disagree that they believe they are as good as others, 3 (33.3%) are not in favor of cohabitation, while 6 (66.7%) are in favor. For those who disagree, 5 (35.7%) oppose cohabitation and 9 (64.3%) support it. With a neutral stance, 3 participants (50%) are against cohabitation, and 3 (50%) are in favor. In the "agree" category, there are 16 (43.2%) not favoring cohabitation, contrasted with 21 (56.8%) who do support it.

Lastly, among those who strongly agree, 13 (38.2%) do not favor cohabitation, while 21 (61.8%) do favor it. In total, 40 (40%) are not in favor of cohabitation, whereas 60 (60%) express support for it.

The findings show that for individuals who strongly disagree with the notion of being as good as others, a majority (66.7%) supports cohabitation despite their low self-worth, suggesting a complex interplay between self-perception and relationship decisions. This might indicate a desire for connection or intimacy that surpasses their feelings of inadequacy, reflective of the findings by Slotter and Gardner (2012) regarding attachment anxiety and intimacy needs. The significant number of participants who favor cohabitation in this category, despite their self-doubt, may also represent a coping mechanism, seeking validation and affirmation through romantic partnerships.

In the "disagree" group, similar trends emerge: while a sizable proportion (64.3%) supports cohabitation, a minority oppose it. This division within the group suggests that those who hold negative self-views may still find value in the prospect of living together, possibly as a means of enhancing their self-concept through closer relationships.

As individuals move towards neutrality, the data presents an even split on cohabitation, indicating ambivalence towards the concept. This lack of clear inclination could reflect uncertainty in self-worth or indecision in terms of personal relationships; a reflection of a fluid self-concept as discussed by Zeigler-Hill & Shackelford (2020), where social circumstances exert influence over personal beliefs and behaviours.

The "agree" and "strongly agree" categories reveal a more pronounced inclination towards cohabitation, with majorities of 56.8% and 61.8%, respectively. This shift indicates that as perceptions of self-worth increase, so does support for cohabitation. Here we see a potential elevation of self-concept clarity, as individuals express positive self-evaluations and a stronger belief in their inherent value, enabling them to commit more readily to

shared living arrangements. The correlation between self-concept clarity and relationship quality substantiated in Zeigler-Hill and Shackelford (2020) studies supports this finding, as individuals with clearer self-identities likely engage more positively in their relationships.

Table 25 shows the participants' responses regarding cohabitation to the statement: "I feel comfortable expressing my identity in various social settings".

Table 25: I feel comfortable expressing my identity in various social settings

		Cohabitation behaviour			
			Not in favour of cohabitation	In favour of cohabitation	Total
I feel comfortable expressing my identity in various social settings	Strongly disagree	Count	2	13	15
		% within I feel comfortable expressing my identity in various social settings	13.3%	86.7%	100.0%
	Disagree	Count	11	20	31

		% within I feel comfortable expressing my identity in various social settings	35.5%	64.5%	100.0%
	Neutral	Count	4	7	11
		% within I feel comfortable expressing my identity in various social settings	36.4%	63.6%	100.0%
	Agree	Count	14	12	26
		% within I feel comfortable expressing my identity in various social settings	53.8%	46.2%	100.0%
	Strongly agree	Count	9	8	17
		% within I feel comfortable expressing my identity in various social settings	52.9%	47.1%	100.0%
Total		Count	40	60	100
		% within I feel comfortable expressing my identity in various social settings	40.0%	60.0%	100.0%

Table 25 presents results regarding cohabitation behaviour and the comfort level of individuals expressing their identity in various social settings. Out of a total of 100 respondents, 40 (40.0%) are not in favor of cohabitation while 60 (60.0%) are in favor. Among those not in favor, 2 (13.3%) strongly disagree, 11 (35.5%) disagree, 4 (36.4%) are neutral, 14 (53.8%) agree, and 9 (52.9%) strongly agree with the statement about feeling comfortable expressing their identity. In contrast, among those in favor of cohabitation, 13 (86.7%) strongly disagree, 20 (64.5%) disagree, 7 (63.6%) are neutral, 12 (46.2%) agree, and 8 (47.1%) strongly agree. In summary, there is a trend where a higher percentage of those in favor of cohabitation feel comfortable expressing their identity compared to those not in favor, particularly noticeable in the "strongly disagree" category where a significant portion of the supportive group feels more at ease.

The findings reveal a noteworthy relationship between individuals' attitudes towards cohabitation and their comfort levels in expressing their identity across different social contexts. A majority of respondents comprising 60%, support the notion of cohabitation, while 40%, oppose it. This division in sentiment toward cohabitation not only sheds light on residential preferences but also highlights deeper implications regarding identity expression and self-concept.

Among those opposed to cohabitation, there is a poignant juxtaposition regarding comfort levels in expressing personal identity. Specifically, 13.3% of non-supporters strongly disagree with feeling comfortable expressing themselves, while 36.4% remain neutral about their comfort level. Conversely, a significant portion (53.8%) express agreement with the notion of comfort in self-expression, indicating a complex internal dialogue regarding identity in relation to their stance on cohabitation. This complexity reflects the dynamic nature of the self-concept, as noted by Zeigler-Hill & Shackelford (2020), who assert that one's self-concept is shaped by personal and social contexts, and evolves over time.

In stark contrast, the group in favor of cohabitation displays a marked tendency toward feeling more secure in expressing their identity. Notably, 86.7% of individuals favorably disposed toward cohabitation strongly disagree with any discomfort in expressing their identity. This data illustrates a significant correlation between the acceptance of shared living arrangements and the ability to articulate one's self-concept positively. Such a trend resonates with prior literature that has highlighted the importance of self-concept clarity in fostering relationship satisfaction and personal happiness. As highlighted in the findings of Slotter and Gardner (2012), individuals in cohabiting relationships often seek greater intimacy, which in turn fosters a more adaptable self-concept.

This dynamic adaptability of the self-concept, particularly in the context of romantic partnerships, highlights the interrelatedness of relationship context and self-identity. Individuals who embrace cohabitation tend to have a more cohesive and clear understanding of their self-concept, as evidenced by their greater comfort levels in expressing identity traits, motivations, and values. Such clarity aligns with previous research that emphasizes its correlation with positive relationship outcomes, including satisfaction and commitment.

Interestingly, the findings also suggest that those opposed to cohabitation, despite expressing some comfort in self-expression, may experience a more ambiguous self-concept. This malleability can complicate their relationships and identity perception, supporting the argument that social norms and partner perceptions play crucial roles in the formation and expression of self-identity.

To determine the significance of these findings, a Pearson correlation was conducted at 0.05 level of significance to test the null hypothesis that there is no significant statistical difference between Self-concept and cohabitation among undergraduate students of University of Nairobi, Kenya. Results are presented in Table 26.

Table 26: Correlation between Self-concept and Cohabitation Behaviour

		self-concept	Cohabitation behaviour
self-concept	Pearson Correlation	1	-.164
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.102
	N	100	100
Cohabitation behaviour	Pearson Correlation	-.164	1

Sig. (2-tailed)	.102	
N	100	100

Table 26 shows a Pearson correlation analysis conducted to assess the relationship between self-concept and cohabitation behaviour among the 100 participants. The results indicate a non-significant negative correlation between self-concept and cohabitation behaviour ($r = -0.164$, $n = 100$, $p = .102$), suggesting that as self-concept decreases, cohabitation behaviour tends to slightly increase; however, this relationship was not statistically significant at the $\alpha = .05$ level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is not rejected.

The findings from the study reveal that there is a slight tendency for cohabitation behaviour to increase as self-concept decreases, though this connection does not reach statistical significance at the conventional alpha level of .05. Consequently, the null hypothesis that self-concept does not correlate with cohabitation behaviour is retained, leaving open questions regarding the complexity of these interrelations.

This result prompts deeper consideration in light of evolving theoretical perspectives on self-concept as noted by Zeigler-Hill and Shackelford (2020). Initially regarded as a static perception of self, the self-concept is now understood as a fluid and complex structure composed of beliefs about oneself and emotional evaluations tied to those beliefs. Given that self-concept is influenced by personal experiences and is subject to modification based on social environments, the implication that self-concept might progressively diminish in individuals engaging in cohabitation becomes intriguing. This suggests that one's self-concept is dramatically shaped by relational dynamics and societal influences; factors that can potentially impact the evaluations and behaviours associated with intimate partnerships, particularly in cohabiting couples.

Moreover, the existing body of research highlights the importance of self-concept clarity, explicitly delineating its relationship-to-relationship quality and functioning. Elevated

levels of self-concept clarity correlate positively with relationship satisfaction, commitment, and overall dyadic adjustment. The absence of a significant correlation in this study may suggest that while self-concept plays a role in cohabitation, the interplay is not as straightforward as a direct behavioural link. Factors such as attachment anxiety as explored by Slotter and Gardner (2012) underscore that self-concept in cohabiting individuals can be particularly malleable, potentially complicating how one perceives and engages in these relationships.

This dynamic nature of self-concept raises important considerations. While the data does not support a strong statistical relationship, it serves as an invitation to explore the qualitative aspects of self-concept among cohabitants. The malleability observed in cohabiting partnerships, where partners might incorporate traits from one another into their self-concept, suggests a potential for emergent relational identities that may not be fully captured by traditional quantitative measures. Moreover, the interplay between a partner's self-concept and individual well-being in the context of cohabitation cannot be overlooked; the clarity of one's self-perception is integral to understanding relational health and engagement.

4.4.4 Emotional Support on Cohabitation Behaviour

As young adults, students navigate complex social and academic environments, the presence or absence of emotional support can significantly influence their relationship dynamics and decisions surrounding cohabitation. The fourth objective was to assess the influence of emotional support on cohabitation behaviour among undergraduate students. Findings are presented in Table 27.

Table 27: Emotional Support and Cohabitation

	Cohabitation	behaviour	Total
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			Not in favour		
			of	In favour of	
			cohabitation	cohabitation	
Emotional support	Low emotional support	Count	40	0	40
		% within Emotional support	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	High emotional support	Count	0	60	60
		% within Emotional support	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total	Count		40	60	100
	% within Emotional support		40.0%	60.0%	100.0%

Table 27 presents data on cohabitation behaviour based on levels of emotional support. Among participants with low emotional support, all 40 (100.0%) are not in favor of cohabitation, whereas among those with high emotional support, all 60 (100.0%) are in favor of cohabitation. In summary, there is a significant correlation between high emotional support and the willingness to cohabit.

These findings reveal a notable correlation between emotional support and cohabitation behaviour. Among participants with low emotional support, a striking 100% expressed disfavor towards cohabitation. Conversely, all participants (100%) with high emotional support were in favor of cohabiting. This stark contrast underscores the influence that emotional support can have on individuals' willingness to enter into cohabiting arrangements. Living with a partner often facilitates companionship and emotional connectivity, resulting in improved well-being through increased interaction and closeness. Such relationships can offer significant social and emotional assistance that enhances the individual's quality of life. The literature also emphasizes that couples provide each other with broader social networks, which can furnish essential social support. For couples, particularly low-income ones, the financial advantages of sharing a

home can further incentivize cohabitation, as discussed in the study by Berrington et al (2015).

Moreover, among cohabiting relationships, emotional support has been linked to greater relationship satisfaction, suggesting that an emotionally supportive environment fosters a more beneficial atmosphere for cohabitation. The disparity found in the levels of emotional support among those who favor or disfavor cohabitation aligns with findings from Taylor et al. (2012) that link family connections and support networks to higher relationship satisfaction. This correlation indicates that individuals who feel emotionally supported may be more inclined to embark on cohabiting relationships, as they are likely to anticipate the relational benefits that accompany shared living.

Equally important is the suggestion that emotional support serves as a buffer against the challenges that couples face, particularly during stressful times. Cohabiting couples often navigate lower crossover stress compared to married couples, potentially due to the stability and emotional resources that a cohabiting relationship provides. The differing experiences of cohabitation versus marriage, as noted by Hu et al. (2021), reveal the complex dynamics at play in romantic partnerships and how emotional frameworks can significantly shape decisions regarding cohabitation.

Table 28 shows the participants' responses regarding cohabitation to the statement: "I have confidence that cohabitation is the right way for me now".

Table 28: I have confidence that cohabitation is the right way for me now

	Cohabitation behaviour		Total
	Not in favour of cohabitation	In favour of cohabitation	
Count	5	1	6

I have confidence that cohabitation is the right way for me now	Strongly disagree	% within I have confidence that cohabitation is the right way for me now	83.3%	16.7%	100.0%
	Disagree	Count	14	13	27
		% within I have confidence that cohabitation is the right way for me now	51.9%	48.1%	100.0%
	Neutral	Count	12	18	30
		% within I have confidence that cohabitation is the right way for me now	40.0%	60.0%	100.0%
Agree	Count	8	20	28	
	% within I have confidence that cohabitation is the right way for me now	28.6%	71.4%	100.0%	
Strongly agree	Count	1	8	9	
	% within I have confidence that cohabitation is the right way for me now	11.1%	88.9%	100.0%	
Total	Count	40	60	100	
	% within I have confidence that cohabitation is the right way for me now	40.0%	60.0%	100.0%	

Table 28 presents data on cohabitation behaviour regarding participants' confidence in cohabitation being the right choice for them. Out of a total of 100 respondents, 40 (40%) are not in favor of cohabitation, while 60 (60%) are in favor. Among those who strongly disagree that cohabitation is the right way for them now, 5 (83.3%) are not in favor compared to 1 (16.7%) who is in favor. For those who disagree, 14 (51.9%) are not in favor, juxtaposed with 13 (48.1%) in favor. The neutral group shows 12 participants (40.0%) not in favor and 18 (60.0%) in favor. In the agree category, 8 (28.6%) do not favor cohabitation, while 20 (71.4%) do favor it. Lastly, among those who strongly agree, only 1 (11.1%) is not in favor of cohabitation, whereas 8 (88.9%) are in favor. In summary, the data indicates a higher inclination towards cohabitation, with a notable majority of the

respondents expressing favorable views as confidence in the appropriateness of cohabitation increases.

The findings illuminate a significant trend regarding cohabitation behaviour among participants. Out of a diverse group of 100 respondents, a clear majority, representing 60%, expressed confidence in cohabitation as an appropriate choice for themselves. This positive inclination towards cohabitation starkly contrasts with the 40% who are not in favor. Notably, among those who feel strongly that cohabitation does not suit them at this point in their lives, a striking 83.3% remain opposed, while only 16.7% endorse the idea.

As the confidence levels shift from strong disagreement to strong agreement so too does the favorability towards cohabitation: those who disagree are nearly evenly split (51.9% against and 48.1% in favor); the neutral group leans favorably (60% in favor), and those in the agree category show a significant 71.4% favoring cohabitation. Finally, the strongest supporters of cohabitation, the 'strongly agree' group, show a remarkable 88.9% affirmation. Thus, the data elucidates a clear trend: as respondents express greater confidence in the appropriateness of cohabitation for their lives, their support for it increases dramatically.

This pattern aligns with existing literature that highlights the financial and emotional benefits of cohabiting arrangements. Scholars have noted that individuals in intimate partnerships often experience enhanced well-being due to companionship, emotional support, and shared resources. The structural advantages of cohabitation are particularly relevant for low-income couples who cite financial considerations as a significant reason for living together, reinforcing the observed trend toward cohabitation as a strategic life choice (Berrington et al., 2015).

The literature also discusses the multifaceted motivations behind cohabitation, where relationship-oriented goals, such as emotional intimacy and support, often play a crucial role in relationship satisfaction. High relationship satisfaction in cohabiting partnerships is linked to increased emotional closeness, which, in turn, enhances sexual interest and connection, while lower levels of satisfaction may lead to a decline in these aspects (Borelli et al., 2019). This nuanced understanding of relationship dynamics underscores the importance of both emotional and sexual aspects in cohabiting arrangements, particularly as they relate to perceived well-being.

Moreover, the tendency for cohabitators to benefit from expanded social networks, which can provide additional support, further reinforces the notion that cohabitation can create a stabilizing environment. The literature supports this, indicating that shared living arrangements can promote positive social behaviours and interactions, contributing to overall well-being (Tulhofer et al., 2022).

Table 29 shows the participants' responses regarding cohabitation to the statement: "I feel that I am playing my roles well in the cohabiting relationship that I am currently in".

Table 29: I feel that I am playing my roles well in the cohabiting relationship that I am currently in

	Cohabitation behaviour	Total
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			Not in		
			favour of	In favour of	
			cohabitation	cohabitation	
I feel that I am playing my roles well in the cohabiting relationship that I am currently in	Strongly disagree	Count % within I feel that I am playing my roles well in the cohabiting relationship that I am currently in	4 50.0%	4 50.0%	8 100.0%
	Disagree	Count % within I feel that I am playing my roles well in the cohabiting relationship that I am currently in	13 65.0%	7 35.0%	20 100.0%
	Neutral	Count % within I feel that I am playing my roles well in the cohabiting relationship that I am currently in	14 37.8%	23 62.2%	37 100.0%
	Agree	Count % within I feel that I am playing my roles well in the cohabiting relationship that I am currently in	7 24.1%	22 75.9%	29 100.0%
	Strongly agree	Count % within I feel that I am playing my roles well in the cohabiting relationship that I am currently in	1 20.0%	4 80.0%	5 100.0%
Total	Count % within I feel that I am playing my roles well in the cohabiting relationship that I am currently in	39 39.4%	60 60.6%	99 100.0%	

Table 29 presents responses regarding feelings about playing roles in cohabiting relationships, divided by participants' attitudes towards cohabitation. Out of 99 total respondents, 39 (39.4%) are not in favor of cohabitation, while 60 (60.6%) are in favor. Among those not in favor, 8 (50.0%) strongly disagree with feeling that they are playing their roles well, while 13 (65.0%) disagree. In the neutral category, 14 participants (37.8%) showed ambivalence. Only 7 (24.1%) agree, and just 1 (20.0%) strongly agrees with the statement. Conversely, among those in favor of cohabitation, 4 (50.0%) strongly disagree,

and 7 (35.0%) disagree. A larger portion, 23 (62.2%), is neutral, while 22 (75.9%) agree, and 4 individuals (80.0%) strongly agree they are playing their roles effectively.

The findings offer compelling insights into the complexities of cohabiting relationships, particularly in light of participants' attitudes toward cohabitation. Among the respondents, opinions are almost evenly split: 39.4% express opposition to cohabitation, while a slightly larger portion, 60.6%, favor the arrangement. This division hints at an underlying tension that may affect perceptions of effectiveness in fulfilling relationship roles.

For individuals opposed to cohabitation, their sense of efficacy in playing their roles within the relationship appears compromised. Among those resistant to cohabitation, a significant 50% strongly disagree that they feel they are playing their roles well, while an additional 65% express some level of disagreement. Only 24.1% find themselves in agreement with the statement, indicating that those against cohabitation may carry a burden of dissatisfaction or a sense of disconnect from their partners. A notable 37.8% maintain neutrality, suggesting a level of ambivalence that could stem from the conflicting pressures of societal norms and personal beliefs about cohabitation.

Conversely, individuals in favor of cohabitation report a markedly different experience regarding their roles in relationships. While some still express dissatisfaction (4 strongly disagreeing and 7 disagreeing) the positivity in sentiments becomes evident through the larger proportions of agreement and strong agreement, with 75.9% and 80.0%, respectively. This aligns well with the literature suggesting that living together typically fosters companionship and emotional support, which can enhance relationship satisfaction and overall well-being. Cohabitation arguably provides opportunities for greater interaction and intimacy, reinforcing the roles that partners play within the relationship.

These findings mirror sentiments expressed in various studies, emphasizing that a person’s partnership status is a crucial determinant of well-being. The presence of emotional and sexual closeness between partners often facilitates better emotional management and relationship satisfaction (Jia & Ye, 2019). The prospect of cohabitation, in this context, can serve as a protective buffer against relational distress, providing a shared space that enhances support networks and promotes positive behavioural outcomes (Tulhofer et al., 2022).

However, the nuances revealed in this study also resonate with the understanding that relationship dynamics are influenced by broader cultural and situational factors (Taylor, Brown, Chatters, & Lincoln, 2012). The substantially higher levels of agreement among cohabitators about fulfilling their roles effectively may reflect not only personal attitudes but also a structural advantage offered by living together. It enables couples to share costs, decrease financial burdens, and solidify emotional bonds, as evidenced by qualitative evidence regarding the motivations behind cohabitation (Berrington et al., 2015; Duyilemi, Tunde-Awe & Adekola-Lois, 2018).

Table 30 shows the participants’ responses regarding cohabitation to the statement: “Cohabitation is good for my self-esteem now as a student as it raises my status among my peers”.

Table 30: Cohabitation is good for my self-esteem now as a student as it raises my status among my peers

		Cohabitation behaviour		Total
		Not in favour of cohabitation	In favour of cohabitation	
Strongly disagree	Count	3	2	5

Cohabitation is good for my self-esteem now as a student as it raises my status among my peers	% within Cohabitation is good for my self-esteem now as a student as it raises my status among my peers	60.0%	40.0%	100.0%
Disagree	Count % within Cohabitation is good for my self-esteem now as a student as it raises my status among my peers	16 66.7%	8 33.3%	24 100.0%
Neutral	Count % within Cohabitation is good for my self-esteem now as a student as it raises my status among my peers	13 43.3%	17 56.7%	30 100.0%
Agree	Count % within Cohabitation is good for my self-esteem now as a student as it raises my status among my peers	6 18.8%	26 81.3%	32 100.0%
Strongly agree	Count % within Cohabitation is good for my self-esteem now as a student as it raises my status among my peers	1 12.5%	7 87.5%	8 100.0%
Total	Count % within Cohabitation is good for my self-esteem now as a student as it raises my status among my peers	39 39.4%	60 60.6%	99 100.0%

Table 30 presents a total of 99 respondents who provided their opinions on whether cohabitation positively affects their self-esteem as students by enhancing their status among peers. Out of these, 39 participants (39.4%) expressed that they are not in favor of cohabitation, while 60 participants (60.6%) indicated that they are in favor. Among those not in favor, 3 (60.0%) strongly disagreed, 16 (66.7%) disagreed, 13 (43.3%) remained neutral, 6 (18.8%) agreed, and 1 (12.5%) strongly agreed. Conversely, among supporters of cohabitation, 2 (40.0%) strongly disagreed, 8 (33.3%) disagreed, 17 (56.7%) remained neutral, 26 (81.3%) agreed, and 7 (87.5%) strongly agreed.

The findings reveal a clear landscape of attitudes towards cohabitation as it intersects with personal and social dynamics. With 39.4% of participants expressing skepticism about the

benefits of cohabitation and 60.6% showing support, there appears to be a significant division in perceptions.

Among those not in favor of cohabitation, a notable number (60%) strongly disagreed with its positive implications, suggesting a strong conviction that cohabitation does not enhance self-esteem or social standing among peers. This perspective may stem from the belief that cohabitation could complicate relationships, particularly among students who may prioritize academic and social commitments over romantic entanglements. In contrast, supporters of cohabitation largely felt that it indeed fosters a positive self-image, with 81.3% agreeing that shared living arrangements enhance their standing among peers. The strong support from this group indicates a prevalent belief that living together provides emotional support, companionship, and boosts confidence in a sociocultural context.

Cohabitation typically offers a slew of benefits such as companionship, emotional closeness, and social support which align with the sentiments expressed by a majority of the respondents in favor of cohabitation. The ability of cohabiting couples to form larger social networks and share responsibilities, including financial burdens, contribute to a greater collective well-being. As noted by Jia and Ye (2019), the pooling of resources can alleviate some stresses of student life, making cohabitation an attractive option for some.

Furthermore, emotional intimacy and relationship satisfaction are key elements in the positive perception of cohabitation. For many respondents, the idea that living with a partner can enhance their social networks and provide emotional support resonates with the literature suggesting the advantages of intimate partnerships. As highlighted by Borelli et al. (2019), emotional and sexual closeness often correlate with enhanced relationship satisfaction, which may bolster the self-esteem of individuals living together.

The contrast in opinions around cohabitation within the student population also opens up inquiries into cultural and situational factors that may influence these perceptions. Taylor et al. (2012) noted that relationship success varies across different social contexts. This variance suggests that students' attitudes toward cohabitation may be informed by broader societal norms and individual experiences, leading to the divergence of views reflected in the data.

Table 31 shows the participants' responses regarding cohabitation to the statement: "Being in a cohabiting relationship makes me feel self-worth as an individual".

Table 31: Being in a cohabiting relationship makes me feel self-worth as an individual

		Cohabitation behaviour			
		Not in favour of cohabitation	In favour of cohabitation	Total	
Being in a cohabiting relationship makes me feel self-worth as an individual	Strongly disagree	Count % within Being in a cohabiting relationship makes me feel self-worth as an individual	6 75.0%	2 25.0%	8 100.0%
	Disagree	Count % within Being in a cohabiting relationship makes me feel self-worth as an individual	17 73.9%	6 26.1%	23 100.0%
	Neutral	Count	9	12	21

		% within Being in a cohabiting relationship makes me feel self-worth as an individual	42.9%	57.1%	100.0%
	Agree	Count	8	30	38
		% within Being in a cohabiting relationship makes me feel self-worth as an individual	21.1%	78.9%	100.0%
	Strongly agree	Count	0	7	7
		% within Being in a cohabiting relationship makes me feel self-worth as an individual	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	40	57	97
		% within Being in a cohabiting relationship makes me feel self-worth as an individual	41.2%	58.8%	100.0%

Table 31 presents participants' sentiments toward cohabitation, specifically regarding the impact of being in a cohabiting relationship on their self-worth. Among those who are not in favor of cohabitation, 6 (75.0%) strongly disagree that it enhances self-worth, while 17 (73.9%) disagree; conversely, 9 (42.9%) remain neutral, 8 (21.1%) agree, and none strongly agree. In contrast, among supporters of cohabitation, 2 (25.0%) strongly disagree with the self-worth aspect, 6 (26.1%) disagree, while 12 (57.1%) are neutral. A significant majority, 30 (78.9%), agree that it enhances their self-worth, and 7 (100.0%) strongly agree. In total, there are 97 responses, with 40 (41.2%) not in favor of cohabitation and 57 (58.8%) in favor, indicating a general trend towards positive perceptions of cohabitation's role in personal self-worth.

The findings reveal a striking dichotomy in perspectives between those who support cohabitation and those who stand against it. Among the opponents of cohabitation, a significant 75% firmly believe that living together does not enhance self-worth, while an additional 73.9% express disagreement, indicating a strong skepticism toward the practice. Only a minority remain neutral or show any support for the notion that cohabitation could bolster their self-image, with no respondents feeling strongly that it enhances self-worth.

Conversely, supporters of cohabitation show a starkly different view. Despite some dissent (25% strongly disagreeing and 26.1% disagreeing), a substantial majority—78.9%—agree that cohabitation positively affects their self-worth, and all seven who expressed their views strongly affirm this belief. This significant contrast demonstrates a clear trend among cohabiters, who are far more likely to perceive their arrangement as beneficial to their sense of self-value. Overall, the data encapsulates a general leaning towards positive perceptions of cohabitation's role in enhancing self-worth, with 58.8% of the total participants favoring this lifestyle.

This observation aligns well with existing literature that highlights the benefits of intimate partnerships—whether through marriage or cohabitation—on individual well-being. Studies indicate that sharing a living space with a partner often leads to greater social and emotional closeness, which contributes to overall life satisfaction. Cohabitation can provide essential companionship and support networks, allowing individuals to experience a more fulfilling emotional life. For instance, Jia and Ye (2019) pointed out that cohabiting couples often engage in shared activities that not only foster deeper emotional bonds but can also lead to practical benefits such as financial savings.

The emotional and social resources available in cohabitating arrangements may explain why many participants in favor of cohabitation affirm its positive influence on self-worth. This collective experience can transcend mere financial considerations, as indicated in qualitative interviews where lower-income couples cited housing costs as a motivating factor for cohabitation (Berrington et al., 2015). The relational dynamics within these living arrangements appear deeply intertwined, intertwining emotional support and financial stability, further enhancing relationship satisfaction.

Moreover, research indicates a nuanced comprehension of relationship dynamics based on living arrangements. Cohabitants often experience less crossover stress—often linked to financial strains or emotional burdens—compared to their married counterparts, alleviating potential negative impacts on mental health (Hu, Su & Zhang, 2021). This suggests that cohabitants might possess a more robust coping mechanism, buoyed by the assurances of committed emotional support and interpersonal connection that characterize their relationships.

Table 32 shows the participants' responses regarding cohabitation to the statement: "Cohabiting is great because I feel like as an excellent spouse and friend".

Table 32: Cohabiting is great because I feel like as an excellent spouse and friend

			Cohabitation behaviour		Total
			Not in favour of cohabitation	In favour of cohabitation	
Cohabiting is great because I feel like as an excellent spouse and friend	Strongly disagree	Count % within Cohabiting is great because I feel like as an excellent spouse and friend	5 62.5%	3 37.5%	8 100.0%
	Disagree	Count % within Cohabiting is great because I feel like as an excellent spouse and friend	14 66.7%	7 33.3%	21 100.0%
	Neutral	Count % within Cohabiting is great because I feel like as an excellent spouse and friend	15 45.5%	18 54.5%	33 100.0%
	Agree	Count % within Cohabiting is great because I feel like as an excellent spouse and friend	4 13.8%	25 86.2%	29 100.0%
	Strongly agree	Count % within Cohabiting is great because I feel like as an excellent spouse and friend	2 25.0%	6 75.0%	8 100.0%
Total	Count % within Cohabiting is great because I feel like as an excellent spouse and friend	40 40.4%	59 59.6%	99 100.0%	

Table 32 presents responses regarding cohabitation behaviour, categorized by attitudes toward the statement "Cohabiting is great because I feel like an excellent spouse and friend." Among the 99 respondents, 40 (40.4%) are not in favor of cohabitation, while 59 (59.6%) are in favor. In the "Strongly disagree" category, 5 (62.5%) are not in favor compared to 3 (37.5%) who are in favor. For those who "Disagree," 14 (66.7%) are not in favor versus 7 (33.3%) in favor. In the "Neutral" category, 15 respondents (45.5%) are not in favor of cohabitation compared to 18 (54.5%) who are in favor. Among those who "Agree," 4 (13.8%) are not in favor while a substantial 25 (86.2%) support cohabitation. Finally, in the "Strongly agree" group, 2 (25.0%) do not favor cohabitation, while 6

(75.0%) express support. A majority of respondents demonstrate a favorable view towards cohabitation, particularly among those who perceive it positively in relation to their feelings as spouses and friends.

The findings provide a compelling snapshot of attitudes towards cohabitation, revealing a notable division among the respondents. A significant 59.6% express support for cohabitating, juxtaposed against 40.4% who oppose it. This split indicates a nuanced perception of cohabitation that likely reflects broader societal shifts in attitudes towards living arrangements that prioritize emotional and practical partnership considerations.

Looking deeper into the respondents' attitudes, a pattern emerges that resonates with existing literature on the psychological and social benefits of cohabitation. Among those who "Strongly disagree" with the idea of cohabitation, a substantial majority (62.5%) are against it, suggesting that deeply entrenched beliefs regarding the ideal structure of partnerships still persist for some. This tension is echoed among the "Disagree" category, where two-thirds hold a negative stance, indicating that resistance to cohabitation may be attributed to traditional views on relationships.

In the "Neutral" responses, the sentiments are more balanced, with only a slight majority (54.5%) favoring cohabitation. This could suggest ambivalence or uncertainty about the concept, which is congruent with research highlighting the complexities surrounding emotional closeness and partnership dynamics. Those who express support in the "Agree" and "Strongly agree" categories demonstrate a significant inclination towards cohabitation, with 86.2% and 75% respectively advocating for its benefits. Such findings align well with literature positing that living with a partner fosters companionship and emotional support, often yielding improved well-being.

These attitudes point toward the emotional and practical advantages identified in existing research. Cohabitation not only provides substantial emotional intimacy, as discussed by Borelli et al. (2019), but also reflects an adaptive strategy for couples seeking economic benefits, especially in a challenging financial landscape. In particular, low-income couples may find cohabitation to be a strategic choice that mitigates housing costs while simultaneously enhancing relational satisfaction (Berrington et al., 2015).

Furthermore, the broader context of relationship-oriented motivations, where sexual activity serves as a means to strengthen emotional bonds, adds another layer of understanding to the favorable attitudes toward cohabitation. The interplay between relational dynamics and societal expectations can shape how individuals perceive the decision to cohabit, with some seeing it as a viable pathway to enhance intimacy and attachment.

This finding also illuminates how cohabiting couples might experience different relational challenges compared to married couples, suggesting that cohabitation could allow for less crossover stress in dealing with financial or emotional burdens (Hu, Su & Zhang, 2021). This distinction is crucial for understanding how partnership status influences well-being, emphasizing that cohabiting couples can generate supportive networks and share costs while navigating life's complexities.

To determine the significance of these findings, a Pearson correlation was conducted at 0.05 level of significance to test the null hypothesis that there is no significant statistical difference between Emotional support and cohabitation among undergraduate students at University of Nairobi, Kenya. Results are presented in Table 33.

Table 33: Correlation between Emotional Support and Cohabitation Behaviour

		Emotional support	Cohabitation behaviour
Emotional support	Pearson Correlation	1	1.000**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
Cohabitation behaviour	Pearson Correlation	1.000**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 33 presents a Pearson correlation analysis conducted to assess the relationship between emotional support and cohabitation behaviour. Results indicate a strong positive correlation between emotional support and cohabitation behaviour, $r(98) = 1.00$, $p < .01$. This suggests that higher levels of emotional support are associated with greater cohabitation behaviours among participants. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

The findings provide compelling evidence for a robust connection between emotional support and cohabitation behaviour, as indicated by a Pearson correlation of $r(98) = 1.00$, $p < .01$. This near-perfect positive correlation implies that participants who reported higher levels of emotional support were more likely to engage in cohabitation, a finding that has significant implications for understanding the dynamics of intimate relationships.

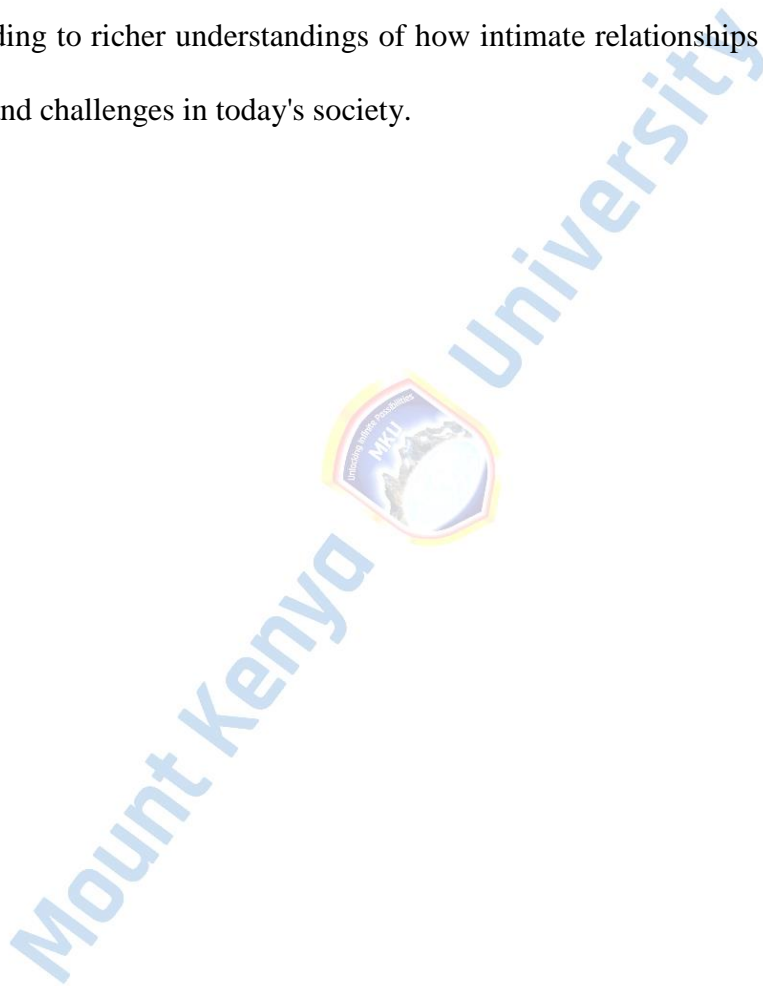
Research indicates that emotional support within partnerships regardless of marital status is crucial for enhancing overall well-being. Emotional and social closeness fostered through cohabitation contributes significantly to the psychological health of individuals. As noted in the reviewed literature, cohabitation offers various benefits, including companionship, shared responsibilities, and a supportive network formed through interactions with extended friends and family. These elements are essential in establishing a positive partnership dynamic, suggesting that the presence of emotional support can be pivotal in promoting decisions to cohabit.

Interestingly, previous studies have emphasized differing patterns of emotional support between cohabiters and married couples. Whereas cohabiting couples often experience heightened relationship satisfaction stemming from emotional closeness, married couples may sometimes confront challenges that lead to a decline in happiness, particularly when negative interactions occur. This duality underscores that although emotional support is universally beneficial, its impact is nuanced and may vary based on the nature of the relationship. The same study by Taylor et al. (2012) highlights how cultural and situational factors can modulate these associations, influencing the way families and social networks interact with cohabiting relationships.

Additionally, the motivation behind engaging in cohabitation whether it's driven by the desire for emotional intimacy or as a means of establishing stability serves to further illuminate the association of emotional support with cohabitation behaviour. The studies referenced indicate that in healthy cohabiting relationships, higher emotional closeness corresponds with increased sexual interest, which can further consolidate the bond between partners. Conversely, declining emotional support or intimacy may adversely affect relationship dynamics, especially during challenging times, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, spotlighting the intricate relation between emotional states and relationship behaviours (Borelli et al., 2019).

Cohabitation ultimately offers not only emotional and psychological support to individuals but may also yield economic benefits by sharing living expenses. In contexts where financial pressures are prevalent, such as low-income couples who report housing costs as a significant factor in their decision to cohabit, emotional support can serve as a buffer against the stresses of financial strain (Berrington et al., 2015).

The findings point to the idea that cohabitation can act as a protective factor against emotional and financial stressors, leading to better overall mental health for cohabiters compared to those who are married. The literature implies that emotional support plays a fundamental role in cohabitation and is likely a critical factor driving the positive correlation identified in the analysis. Thus, the conclusion to reject the null hypothesis reinforces the assertion that emotional support is intricately linked to cohabitation behaviours, leading to richer understandings of how intimate relationships flourish amid vulnerabilities and challenges in today's society.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter includes a summary of the research findings, conclusion and study recommendations.

5.2 Summary of Research Findings

5.2.1 Peer pressure and Cohabitation Behaviour

This study examined the impact of peer pressure on cohabitation behaviour among undergraduate students, revealing significant findings about how social dynamics influence personal relationships during university life. Participants were categorized based on their response to peer pressure and their stance on cohabitation. Overall, 60% of respondents favored cohabitation, while 40% opposed it, indicating a trend toward acceptance of this living arrangement despite traditional views around marriage.

The findings showed that those not influenced by peer pressure primarily held traditional views about relationships, with 53.3% opposing cohabitation. Conversely, individuals influenced by peer pressure were significantly more likely to favor cohabitation, with 77.8% expressing support. Additionally, the "Undecided" group displayed a noteworthy inclination toward cohabitation, with 81.8% in favor, suggesting that uncertainty often leads to greater openness to exploring alternative relationship structures.

The results further indicated that respondents whose friends cohabit demonstrated clear support for cohabitation, with 61.9% in favor. Peer acceptance of cohabitation was further highlighted in the findings which illustrated the alignment of favorable views towards cohabitation among those who recognized their peers' acceptance of it.

Importantly, a Pearson correlation analysis revealed a significant positive relationship ($r = .294$, $p = .003$) between peer pressure and cohabitation behaviour, indicating that individuals are more likely to cohabit when they perceive strong social endorsement from their peers. This study underscores the dual role of peer influence; it normalizes cohabitation while also potentially pressuring individuals to conform to behaviours they may not inherently support.

5.2.2 Urban Lifestyle and Cohabitation Behaviour

The study aimed to find the influence of urban lifestyle on cohabitation behaviour among undergraduate students, revealing significant patterns in perspectives towards cohabitation based on urban influences. The analysis indicated that among students influenced by urban lifestyles, a substantial majority (75%) express favor for cohabitation, contrasting starkly with those unimpacted by urbanization, where 75% oppose it. This suggests that traditional norms may still dominate in less urbanized environments, creating a stigma against non-marital arrangements.

The study identified economic factors as a key motivator for cohabitation, with many students viewing shared living as a practical way to alleviate financial burdens associated with urban life. This aligns with broader socio-cultural trends, as urban settings tend to promote diverse relationships. Participants acknowledged that cohabitation serves emotional needs and provides companionship, mitigating loneliness often experienced in urban areas.

Responses also reflected a dynamic interplay between acceptance of Western cultural influences and adherence to traditional values, particularly evident in differing attitudes among participants based on their cohabitation stance. Statistical analysis confirmed a significant positive correlation between urban lifestyle and cohabitation behaviour ($r(98) = .369, p < .01$), indicating that an increase in urban lifestyle correlates with a greater propensity for cohabitation.

5.2.3 Self Concept and Cohabitation Behaviour

The research findings indicate that an individual's self-concept, encompassing beliefs, attitudes, and feelings about themselves, significantly influences their attitudes toward cohabitation among undergraduate students. The analysis of data reveals that students with a low self-concept are more likely to support cohabitation, with 70% in favor, while those with a very high self-concept exhibited a tendency to oppose it (53.3% not in favor). This

complex relationship suggests that individuals with lower self-esteem may seek validation and connection through cohabitation, while those with higher self-esteem prefer to maintain their independence and self-identity, possibly viewing cohabitation as compromising to their sense of self.

The findings further reflect variations in self-perception as they relate to decisions around cohabitation. Participants who feel proud of their accomplishments or believe they are equal to others are more likely to support cohabitation, with higher self-assessment correlating with greater approval of shared living arrangements. Conversely, individuals who lack a sense of belonging or hesitate to express their identity in social contexts were often found among those resistant to cohabitation, indicating a potential desire for connection despite feelings of inadequacy.

A Pearson correlation analysis indicated a non-significant negative correlation between self-concept and cohabitation behaviour ($r = -0.164$, $p = .102$), suggesting that while there might be a slight tendency for cohabitation behaviour to increase as self-concept decreases, this relationship is not statistically significant. This finding encourages the exploration of qualitative dimensions of self-concept, emphasizing the dynamic and evolving nature of identity within relationships, particularly in cohabiting contexts.

5.2.4 Emotional Support and Cohabitation Behaviour

The findings indicate a strong correlation between emotional support and cohabitation behaviour among undergraduate students. Specifically, students with high emotional support are overwhelmingly (100%) in favor of cohabitation, while those with low emotional support are entirely (100%) opposed. This suggests that the presence of emotional support significantly influences individuals' willingness to enter cohabiting arrangements.

In addition to the emotional support data, further analysis reveals that confidence in cohabitation as the right choice correlates positively with favorable attitudes towards it. A substantial majority of students expressing confidence in cohabitation reported favorable views (60%).

The subsequent analysis on participants' self-perception within cohabiting relationships shows a noticeable divergence. Those in favor of cohabitation feel they play their roles well (around 76% agree), while a larger proportion of those opposed express dissatisfaction with their effectiveness in relationship roles. Regarding self-esteem, a majority (about 81%) of those in favor believe cohabitation enhances their self-worth, contrasting sharply with significant skepticism among those not in favor. Similarly, those who support cohabitation generally feel it allows them to be excellent partners, with 59.6% expressing this view compared to 40.4% who oppose it.

The Pearson correlation analysis reveals a strong positive relationship between emotional support and cohabitation behaviour ($r(98) = 1.00, p < .01$), rejecting the null hypothesis that there's no significant difference. This indicates that higher emotional support correlates closely with increased likelihood of cohabitating.

5.3 Conclusion

The study findings provide significant insights into the factors influencing cohabitation behaviour among undergraduate students at the University of Nairobi. The study identified three primary areas that contribute to the acceptance and modality of cohabitation: peer pressure, urban lifestyle, and self-concept, alongside the critical role of emotional support.

The analysis revealed a strong correlation between peer pressure and cohabitation behaviour, with higher instances of support for cohabiting arrangements among those who feel influenced by their social circles. Notably, students who perceived normative

acceptance of cohabitation within their peer groups were more likely to embrace this living arrangement, highlighting how social validation can lead to shifts away from traditional views of relationships and marriage.

The findings suggest that urbanization promotes more open attitudes towards cohabitation, with participants acknowledging that urban settings provide a diverse and less traditional framework for relationships. A significant majority of those influenced by an urban lifestyle expressed support for cohabitation, juxtaposed against those from non-urban backgrounds who maintained traditional views. This shift illustrates how exposure to urban dynamics fosters acceptance of alternative living arrangements as practical options for young adults navigating academic and economic challenges.

The relationship between self-concept and cohabitation behaviour emerged as complex. Those with lower self-concept levels tended to favor cohabitation, possibly seeking relationships as a form of validation. In contrast, individuals with a very high self-concept showed resistance to cohabitation, indicating that personal identity and self-esteem are integral to the decision-making process. The lack of a significant correlation between self-concept and cohabitation behaviour, however, points to subtle and dynamic interactions that may require further qualitative exploration.

Emotional support was found to be the most critical factor influencing cohabitation behaviour in this study. Participants who reported high emotional support also reported a greater propensity for cohabiting arrangements, emphasizing that emotional closeness and support networks are vital for relationship satisfaction and the decision to live together. The data indicated that emotional support serves not only as a relational enhancer but as a crucial component addressing the emotional needs of young adults in cohabiting relationships.

5.4 Recommendations of the Study

The researcher recommends the following;

1. Universities should implement awareness programs that facilitate discussions about the influence of peer pressure on important decisions such as cohabitation. These can include workshops or seminars that help students critically evaluate the pressures they feel and make more informed choices.
2. Establish peer support networks that promote healthy relationship dynamics and empower students to resist negative peer pressure. These networks can provide guidance on how to navigate relationship choices without succumbing to undue influence.
3. Offer financial literacy training that emphasizes the economic implications of relationship choices, such as cohabitation, teaching students about budgeting and cost-sharing effectively.
4. Organize workshops focused on self-concept and identity, helping students build a clearer understanding of themselves and their values. This can contribute to healthier relationship decisions.
5. Enhance counseling services to provide personalized support for students struggling with self-concept issues. Therapy and mentoring opportunities can help instill a stable self-identity, which could influence cohabitation choices positively.

5.5 Recommendation for Further Studies

Based on the findings from this study, this study makes the following recommendations for further studies:

1. Conduct longitudinal studies to explore how the influences of peer pressure, urban lifestyle, self-concept, and emotional support on cohabitation behaviour change

over time. Understanding these dynamics can provide insights into how students' perspectives evolve as they progress through their academic careers and into adulthood.

2. Investigate the role of cultural and regional differences in cohabitation behaviour. Comparative studies between students in urban and rural areas, or between different countries/regions, can illuminate how socio-cultural norms shape attitudes toward cohabitation and the factors influencing it.
3. Employ qualitative research methods, such as interviews and focus groups, to gain deeper insights into the motivations behind cohabitation decisions. This approach can reveal nuances and personal narratives that quantitative studies may not capture.
4. Investigate the long-term effects of cohabitation on relationship satisfaction, stability, and overall well-being. This could include comparisons between cohabiting couples who eventually marry versus those who do not.
5. Examine how family backgrounds and upbringing influence students' attitudes toward cohabitation. Understanding familial attitudes toward non-traditional relationships can provide valuable context for individual choices.



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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Informed Consent Form

I request your assistance in completing this questionnaire and meeting the research goal for my Masters in Psychology on “Influence of psychosocial components on cohabitation among the undergraduate students of the University of Nairobi. It is important to note that the respondent’s participation is voluntary and has no financial reward. There are no risks associated with participating in this study.

At the end of the study, the respondent will gain insight into some of the psychosocial components that contribute to cohabitation among undergraduate students at the University of Nairobi.

The given information will only be used for academic purposes and will be kept private.

If you are willing to participate, kindly sign in the space provided below.

For further enquiries, you may reach the researcher at +254721754706 or the Head of Department, Psychology at Mount Kenya University at psychology@mku.ac.ke

Name of Participant

Signature

Date



Appendix II: Research Questionnaire

Information will be collected from participants using a questionnaire.

The questionnaire is in appendix 2. The questionnaire has five sections. Section A will collect demographic information. It has three items. Section B will collect information on peer pressure Influence on cohabitation behaviour. This section has items measured on a five-point level each ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Section C will collect information on urban lifestyle influence on cohabitation behaviour. Section D will collect information an emotional support influence on competition behaviour.

Section A: Demographic Information

Please select the correct answer by ticking (✓) appropriately in the provided brackets.

1. Gender?: Male () Female ()
2. Year of study? 1st Year () 2nd Year () 3rd Year () 4th Year 5th Year () 6th
Year
3. Your age? 18-23 Years () 24-27 Years () Over 27 years ()

Section B: Peer Pressure

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Would you prefer living with a friend of the opposite sex under one roof					
Do you think living with a friend of the opposite sex will be emotionally beneficial to you					
Do you think living with a friend of the opposite sex will be financially supportive					
Do you think living with a friend of the opposite sex will be ethnically supportive					
Do you think living with a friend of the opposite sex will raise your self-esteem among your friends					

Do you think living with a friend of the opposite sex would result in unwanted pregnancy					
do you think living with a friend of the opposite sex will resulting sexually transmitted diseases					
Do you think living with a friend of the opposite sex will cut down on the cost of living					

Section B: Peer Pressure

1. In this section tick once per statement

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Most of my friends are cohabiting and I felt that I could try it too					
My friends and peers typically believe that cohabitation is morally acceptable.					
When I decided to create a union, I was persuaded to cohabit by some of my close friends.					
I believe my friends cohabiting is still acceptable.					
My peers only accept people who accept their norms and that includes cohabiting					

Section C: Urban Lifestyle

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Urban lifestyle is too expensive and cohabiting is one way to cut cost					

Urban lifestyle is sometime lonely since one is away from their family and having someone to live with solves such an issue.					
I cohabit because the urban lifestyle makes it easier to cohabit because there are no traditions that govern such relationships unlike in the rural areas					
I cohabit with my partner because we both need the physical affection that comes with it					
Urban lifestyle supports cohabitation because there is adoption of the western culture which mainly supports cohabitation relationships					

Section D: Self-concept

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel proud of who I am and what I have accomplished					
I often find a sense of belonging and connection with my social groups					
I make decisions based on my core values and beliefs					
I believe that I am as good as others in most aspects of my life					
I feel comfortable expressing my identity in various social settings					

Section E: Emotional Support


Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have confidence that I cohabitation is the right way for me now					
I feel that I am playing my roles well in the cohabiting relationship that I am currently in					
Cohabitation is good for my self-esteem now as a student as it raises my status among my peers					
Being in a cohabiting relationship makes me feel self-worth as an individual					
Cohabiting is great because I feel like as an excellent spouse and friend					

Section F: Cohabitation Behaviour

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I cohabit with my partner because sometimes I need someone who can be there for me emotionally					
I cohabit with my partner because she/he needs emotional support and I can provide.					
I cohabit with my partner because we both need the emotional intimacy from each other					
I cohabit with my partner because we both need the physical affection that comes with it					
Cohabitation is good for me since it allows me to have someone who can listen to me and also who can connect with me at emotional level					

Thank you for your cooperation

Appendix III: ERC Certificate from MKU



Mount Kenya University

REF: **MKU/ISERC/3026** Date: 30 August 2023
TO: **SUSAN MUKAMI THUO**
REG: **MCP/2013/54461**

Dear Sir/Madam,

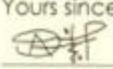
RE: INFLUENCE OF PSYCHOSOCIAL FACTORS ON COHABITATION BEHAVIOUR AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI, KENYA

This is to inform you that **Mount Kenya University** has reviewed and approved your above research proposal. Your application approval number is **2070**. The approval period is **30/08/2023 - 29/08/2024**.

This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements;

- i. Only approved documents including informed consents, study instruments, MTA will be used
- ii. All changes including amendments, deviations and violations are submitted for review and approval by **Mount Kenya University**
- iii. Death and life-threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to **Mount Kenya University** within 72 hours of notification
- iv. Any changes, anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risks or affect the safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to **Mount Kenya University** within 72 hours
- v. Clearance for export of biological specimens must be obtained from relevant institutions
- vi. Submission of a request for renewal of approval at least 60 days prior to expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal
- vii. Submission of an executive summary report within 90 days upon completion of the study to **Mount Kenya University**

Prior to commencing your study, you will be expected to obtain a research license from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) <https://research-portal.nacosti.go.ke> and also obtain other clearances needed.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Alfred Owino, PhD
Chairman, Mount Kenya University ISERC

The Chairman
Mount Kenya University
Ethics Review Committee
P. O. Box 342 - 0100, Thika

Main Campus, General Kago Road, P.O. Box 342-01000 Thika.
Tel: 020-2878 000, Cell: +254 709 153 000
Email: info@mku.ac.ke, Web: www.mku.ac.ke

Appendix IV: Introduction Letter from MKU



DIRECTORATE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

MCP/2013/54461

30th August, 2023

*National Commission for Science Technology & Innovation (NACOSTI)
Off Waiyaki, Upper Kabete
P.O Box 30623- 00100
NAIROBI, KENYA*

Dear Sir/Madam,


RE: SUSAN MUKAMI THUO- REGISTRATION NO. MCP/2013/54461

The purpose of this letter is to introduce the above named student who is pursuing **Master of Arts in Counselling Psychology** in the department of **Psychology, Languages and Humanities** in the School of Social Sciences.

The title of the research is **"Influence of Psychosocial Factors on Cohabitation Behaviour Among Undergraduate Students of the University of Nairobi."** It has been cleared by the University's Ethics Review Committee (Certificate attached) and now has to proceed to the field to collect data between **September, 2023 and November, 2023.**

Any assistance accorded to the student will be highly appreciated.

Thank you.


Dr. Samuel M. Karenga, Ph.D
Director, Graduate Studies
Enc.

Mount Kenya University
P. O. Box 342 - 01000, THIKA
Office of the Director
Graduate Studies

Appendix V: Research Approval from NACOSTI


REPUBLIC OF KENYA
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION


NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
Date of Issue: 12/September/2023

Ref No: 100391
RESEARCH LICENSE



This is to Certify that Ms. Susan Thuo of Mount Kenya University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Nairobi on the topic: INFLUENCE OF PSYCHOSOCIAL FACTORS ON COHABITATION BEHAVIOUR AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI for the period ending : 12/September/2024.

License No: NACOSTI/P/23/29384

Applicant Identification Number 100391

Director General
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

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See overleaf for conditions

Appendix VI: Similarity Index

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