NEW WAVE OF CAMPUS DATING IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract
The new wave of campus dating in Nigeria Tertiary institutions and its disruptive effect on academic activities is quite alarming. This is largely due to the influence of social media and the development of many different apps and web sites. In order to fully understand the magnanimity of this on academic performance of students, the paper, through literature review and analysis of three related theories, explored the causes of campus dating which include, peer group influences, coercive parental training, and permissive society. It is also caused by the desire to belong and desire for sex, adventures and exploration as well as social and economic reasons. The papers discovered that some of the romantic activities happen during school hours, and this make the dating partners to loose focus and interest in their academic work. The paper also opined that campus dating also has many health related and educational implications. This including dropping of out of school due to unwanted pregnancy as well as the contaminations of various sexual transmitted diseases. The paper finally recommends that parents should devote more attention to training their children and monitoring the type of internet facilities and friends they interact with in the school and at home. Tertiary Institutions should control the dressing mode and other romantic activities, especially cohabitation of their students. The Government should sensor the types of films and movies displayed in this country.
Keywords: *New wave, campus dating, tertiary institutions, Nigeria.*

Introduction

Campus Dating in many Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria, for the past two decades has had a long-standing interest. This interest is intensified by the development of different dating apps an web sites with its corresponding increase in sexual violence, conterminations of sexual transmited diseases as well as unwanted pregnancy. These constitute big disruption to students' academic activities in their different institutions of learning. Institutions are instituted essentially for advanced learning and acquisition of knowledge. However, it plays some other obvious yet latent functions such as match-making of potential marriage partners, provision of environment for creating and fostering friendship, attraction of urban activities to school environment, etc. It is this social environment that facilitates dating among students on campus. Almost every student who has passed through the university would have had a dating experience as undergraduate pursuing academic goals.

Since dating is quite a degree of interpersonal relationship there must be some level of exchange (such as time, money, ideas, privilege, gifts, rewards, etc) among individuals involved. However, there are a number of social ills such as cultism, problem drinking, drug abuse, partying, premarital sex and dating which often distract students from concentrating on their studies. These social ills particularly dating has contributed to poor academic performance among university students. Therefore, the motivation this paper is assert that these social ills resulting from campus dating are highly disruptive to academic activities in Nigeria and other countries.

Dating is a relationship between two persons usually male and female (Okigbo, 2016). It is said to have occurred when two consenting individuals are in a romantic relationship. It is an organized means by which people move from being single to being married. Sociologists describe the dating

process as a marriage market in which prospective spouses compare the assets and liabilities of eligible partners and choose the best available mate (Abosi, 2016). On the other hand, academic performance is a key feature in education. It is usually the outcome of students' evaluation which enables examiners to ascertain the extent to which a student has achieved desired academic results (Omage, 2017). Commitment towards academic pursuits can be distorted by such factors as peer group influence, recreational activities and dating.

As stated by Onuoha (2015), campus dating usually starts when a student meets with the opposite gender and they develop attraction or feelings of likeness towards each other. Although campus dating may be harmless, being involved with the wrong people may expose students to harassments, drug abuse and weekend marriages. In some cases, students are careless about the kind of person they connect with which prompts them to act on grounds of unhealthy peer pressure to be like their friends. Researchers like Ali, Zubair, Fahad, Hamid and Awais (2016), affirmed that just like the western world, Nigerian youths are becoming predominantly premarital in their sexual activities. This has made greater number of youths to be sexually active and engaging in unprotected sex regardless of the possible dangers.

Globally, according to Pew Research Foundation (2018), nearly 1.5 million students world wide experience physical abuse from dating every year. Statistically, one in three adolescents in the U.S. is a victim of physical, sexual, emotional and verbal abuse from a dating partner. One in every 10 university students has been purposefully hit, slapped or physically hurt by a girlfriend or boyfriend (Pew Research Foundation, 2018). Studies in the United States and Canada have found an extremely high prevalence of physical assault on dating partners, with about 20-40 percent of the students reported one or more assaults in the previous 12 months (Omage, 2017). In Nigeria, about 20-30 percent of students reported physical and sexual coercion in 2016, and the estimates were even higher when verbal threats and emotional abuse were considered (Ogunsanya, 2017).

In Africa, there are good reasons for parents to be worried about the rising cases of campus dating (Moyosola, 2013). Okoroji (2015) notes that in many African countries including Ghana, South Africa, Gabon, Togo, Nigeria, etc, campus dating usually leads to cohabitation. The author explained that the trends in campus dating in Nigerian universities include living together with the partner (cohabitation), regular visit to the partner, sleepovers, reading together, going to school together, walking together in the streets, hugging, kissing, holding hands in the street, calling each other on the phone, pet names, attending parties together etc, depending on the form of campus dating, cohabitation can mar the academic performance of undergraduates in so many ways.

Azuanuka (2016), observed that most female students who live in the same room with their boyfriends tend to do all the domestic chores (such as cleaning the house, laundry, cooking and fetching water), most times alone while the males usually engage in watching movies, series, football matches, playing online games etc. These habits could make students to lose concentration in school activities, lack understanding during study time, engage in poor study habits such as reading, smooching, chatting etc. Okigbo (2016) revealed that some students may not be able to adequately manage their emotions, as they sacrifice class attendance and study sessions to make their partners happy with their physical presence. Elegbeleye (2018), noted that some undergraduates who are into campus dating spend their time thinking, talking and engaging in romantic activities which often affect their academic performance due to lack of focus. Other problems associated with campus dating include stress, worry, increasing dependence on the partner and frequent fights.

The situation is not different in Nigerian schools where Okigbo (2016) observed that campus dating revolves around a number of factors such as adolescence, youthful exuberance, the need for companion, a reading mate, sex mate, expression of new found freedom, role play etc. Overall, campus dating may lead to lack of interest in school activities. Poor results or carryovers among students may also be linked to campus dating (Okigbo, 2016). For Okonta (2015), the effects of campus dating on the academic performance of students are many and may include inconsistent academic performance, abysmal performance in quiz, absenteeism and truancy. Campus dating is a major factor affecting the academic performance of students. Okonkwo (2016) noted that students who engage in campus dating are likely to indulge in examination malpractice, and as expected a student cannot give what he/she does not have.

Across Nigerian universities, studies have been carried out on the perceived implications of campus dating but only few of these studies have been specifically narrowed down to the effects of campus dating as disruptive of students` academic performance . This creates gap in knowledge that needed scholarly intervention, hence the need for this paper.

Campus as disruptive agent to Educational Activities

(Newman, 2015). Myers (2010) cited in George (2015) observed that nowadays most university students are synchronizing their time in both academic and romantic aspect. In the university, most students become interested and involved in dating because of the desire to be like others.

Furthermore, individual differences in academic performance have been linked to differences in teir involvement in campus dating as well as intelligence and personality. (Livingstone & Brake, 2016). A recent meta-analysis suggested that mental curiosity (as measured by typical intellectual engagement) has an important influence on academic achievement in addition to intelligence and consciousness. Thus, parent`s academic socialization is a term describing the way parents influence students` academic performance by shaping students` skills, behaviours and attitudes towards school. Parents influence students through the environment and type of discussion that parents have with their children. Academic performance can be influenced by parent`s socioeconomic status. This means that highly educated parents tend to have more stimulating learning environments (Livingstone & Brake, 2016).

Donald (2016) noted that campus dating takes different forms depending on the actors in love. It usually involves two or more people who already decided that they share romantic or sexual feelings towards each other. These people will have dates on a regular basis, and they may or may not be having sexual attachments. This event and period of dating is sometimes seen as a precursor to engagement. Some cultures require people to wait until a certain age to begin dating, which has been a source of controversy.

The manifestation of campus dating varies according to countries and institutions (Myers, 2015). Campus dating is not-size-fits-all. It not only means something different to everyone, but it also looks and feels different to everyone. That is why there are so many different forms of campus dating, so that each student can find the best fit for their individual lifestyle, personality and concept of love. Just like people need to date different people to learn what they want in a potential life partner. Untimely, adolescents want to find someone whose preferred relationship type is similar to theirs. Published literature has shown that there a number of campus dating including monogamous dating or relationships, polyamorous relationships, open relationships, long-distance

relationships, casual sex relationships, friends with benefits and asexual relationships (Myers, 2015).

Contributing to the discussion, Onyekachi (2016), revealed that open relationship is very common among youths in Nigerian universities who fall within the age bracket of 20-25 years. He conceived open dating or relationship as a hybrid of monogamous and polyamorous relationships. While an open relationship allows both partners to share physical intimacy with anyone they want, they reserve their emotional intimacy for each other; so each person can have as many sexual partners as they want, but only one romantic partner (Onyekachi, 2016). In the same vein, long-distance relationship is pretty self-explanatory, as they only occur when partners have a long amount of distance separating them. Due to the lack of physical intimacy caused by the couple`s physical separation, some choose to open their relationship while they live far apart, while the "long distance" part of this relationship is often temporary, some undergraduates choose to open their relationships while they live happily ever apart indefinitely (Dike, 2015).

Similar to open relationship is casual relationship, except that in the latter both partners agree to have sex with each other on a regular basis (Onyekachi, 2016). Those in casual relationships can be physically and emotionally intimate with others as well, so long as both people are okay with it. Casual sex relationships can also be exclusive ─ meaning that neither person sleeps with anyone else, which is similar to monogamous relationships, without the emotional connection. According to Ezeoye (2016), a "friend with benefits relationship is similar to a casual sex relationship, but one important difference is that outside the sexual relationship the partners behave purely platonically. Usually, a friend with benefit relationship ends when one or both partners start to date someone else. Lastly, some undergraduates are asexual, meaning they do not experience sexual desire or attraction to others, but they still want to participate in a romantic relationship. While asexual students often choose to date each other to create a purely asexual relationship, this is not always true because sometimes they engage in sexual acts after much pressure from the other partner.

Frayer (2014) believes that there are two categories of factors that motivate students to engage in campus dating. The first is social while the second is economic. On the social front, peer pressure is the major influencer of campus dating. For Frayer (2014), undergraduates learn to date with their fellows from their friends. The desire to feel among is hinged on the need to impress friends. Sometimes, failure to do what friends want results to ostracism from friends and insults targeted at tagging the student as unfit to associate with those friends. Another social factor is the absence of parents and the freedom that campus life confers on the student. Most undergraduates who came from their family homes are not allowed by their parents to interact with the opposite sex; how much more of living with them. For Frayer (2014), the freedom living alone confers on students make them become predisposed to cohabiting. Economically, dating reduces the financial burden of female students hence their willingness to cohabit. Also, it is an avenue for the cohabiting partners to save money on extra accommodation.

Conte (2015) agrees that the desire for constant sex influences dating among university students. Young people are adventurous and always willing to engage in sexual exploration for the fun of it. This makes dating and cohabitation appealing to them, Onyenwe (2011), sees the need for companionship as another factor that influences campus dating. Companionship is a major need for undergraduates as the reality of loneliness occasioned by being away from home dawns on them. Both female and male undergraduates are desirous of companionship and everyone moves

out to get the desired companion they want in the form of campus dating. Nowadays, campus dating is widespread and students are more interested in living together with their lovers under the same roof than studying hard to pass their exams. Onuoha (2015) observed that campus dating is so alarming that parents and guardians are beginning to get worried about the academic performance of their children. While few students have benefitted from campus dating, majority have abandoned their studies, others are always active on social media looking for online dates (Abuchi & Nwanne, 2015).

It has been observed that campus dating affects academic performance of students in higher institutions in Nigeria (Okigbo, 2016). Being involved in a romantic relationship means that undergraduates could lose concentration and experience poor study habit. For this reason, Chukwu (2016) noted that school and parents that want to predict how certain students will perform academically would do well to look at the type of relationships they keep. This point is very important because it appears that engaging in romantic relationship can hamper academic performance of undergraduates in many ways. It follows therefore that time and energy spent cuddling, smooching, and getting intimate when properly used could improve one`s academic record. Simply put, campus dating has all it takes to affect undergraduates` grades in school. It makes undergraduates not to reach their full potentials in terms of academic achievements.

Chukwu (2016) opined that campus dating when poorly managed can make students to get carried away, become truants and absent from school activities and this hampers their ability to perform well during school test. Poor academic grade as observed among undergraduates in Nigeria is one of the major consequences of campus dating (Okoroji, 2016). Sometimes, undergraduates who engage in romantic relationships may lose touch with reality or whatever that is happening in their immediate environment. They are likely to yearn to see their partners while lecture is ongoing and sometimes lose interest in attending lectures because of crave to be with their partners or to attend parties and picnics where free alcohol will be surplus with their lover.

Abosi (2016) lamented that most times these parties are organized during school hours, even when they are organized in the night, it prevents undergraduates from studying their books, doing home assignments and preparing for quiz and examinations. The consequence at the end of the day is poor academic grades. Umerah (2016) regretted that some students have delayed their graduation many times because of poor academic grades and accumulated carryovers. This agrees with Ukwayi (2015) who maintained that students who engage in campus dating usually get carried away and may easily involve themselves in situations that make them lose focus on school activities. The consequence however is that such students run the risk of scoring below pass, underperforming or having poor academic grades at the end of the semester on their own accord.

Kerpelman (2016), posited that to reduce the effects of campus dating among students, parents must use effective discipline, monitoring and problem solving techniques; effective discipline entails recognizing the existence of casual sexual and open or romantic relationships and keeping track of them when they occur. Consistent discipline must be ensured at the sighting of these behaviours in order to prevent their development. However, overly harsh punishments will not stop adolescents from dating themselves; it will rather enhance it. Undergraduates may view any punishment as unfair and unjust and this can cause them to engage in more unconventional sexual behaviours. Monitoring involves the awareness of where the children are, who their friends are, and what they do in their free time. Kosoko (2014) suggested that monitoring is a very good and popular way to reduce the negative effects of campus dating among undergraduates.

Asogwa (2017) opined that coercive parenting exacerbates the negative traits influencing campus dating. This type of parenting is characterized by explosiveness and threats that are normally coupled with little consistency or follow-through. He suggested that parents should instead engage in positive parenting by continually appreciating and encouraging their children`s pro-social behaviours (Asogwa, 2017). Parents who do not reinforce positive behaviours and who do not effectively punish their children for involvement in campus dating are more likely to experience weak bonds with their children. It is through this weak bond that a child is more likely to participate in more romantic relationships. Hence, it is important for parents to establish effective communication feedback with their children to curb their involvement in sex before marriage (Ogunsanya, 2017).

Onyekachi (2016), opined that crucial measures that should be put in place to reduce the negative effects of campus dating among university students include; that the process of reducing and controlling romantic affairs among students (campus dating) should start with the identification of the type of undergraduates enrolled in schools. This is because it is only when the personal psychological makeup of the students are known that one can device the appropriate methods of managing them to the desired standard. Behavioural motivation techniques should be employed to manage undergraduates who engage in campus dating as alternative to expulsion and corporal punishments of different kinds. A wholesome approach to reduce intimate relationships among students should be adopted by all university authority in Nigeria, and lastly, each university should have a set of rules and regulations that will guide all sexual actions and inactions of the students during school hours and should be constantly read to the hearing of all students during seminars and workshops (Dike, 2015).

Differential Association Theory

The proponent of differential association theory is Edwin Sutherland. The theory was propounded in the year 1939. Differential association theory describes the process of social interaction through which people learn deviant behaviour. According to Sutherland, people learn deviant behaviour in the same way that they learn to conform to the people around them. He went further to state that the frequency, duration and degree of intimacy of people`s interactions were key to learning conforming and non-conforming behaviours. Sutherland proposes that through interaction with others, individuals learn the values, attitudes, techniques and motives for deviant behaviours. Differential association theory focuses on how individuals learn to become deviants, and on specific acts, as opposed to the more subjective position of social impressions on one`s identity (Sutherland, 1939).

In relation to this study, according to differential association theory, the desire, tricks and tactics to engage in campus dating are learned through social interaction with peer group members. This obviously means that pressure from friends makes university students to conform and engage in romantic relationships while in school. This implies that peer group association serves as a predictive factor responsible for campus dating in Nigerian universities and Paul University, Awka is not an exception. In other words, students who communicate regularly with peers in the neighbourhood that engage in premarital sex could easily initiate or accept campus dating. However, undergraduates might respond to the same situation differently depending on how their experience predisposes them to define their current academic environment. While differential association theory has been popular in studies of campus dating and other romantic relationships, Sutherland has been criticized on the ground that his theory was not testable, i.e. not easily

subjected to evaluation. Again, the theory does not take into account personality traits that might contribute to sex drive in humans, but instead focuses on group norms, association and influence.

Strain Theory

Strain theory was propounded by Robert Merton (1957). Strain theory is an extension of anomie theory by Durkheim where the concept of anomie simply refers to a social condition in which people who feel weak ties to a social group find it difficult to know what to do because social norms are unclear or have broken down. According to Merton, people experience strain when there is a disjuncture between the cultural goals and the socially approved means of achieving these goals. The theory states that in order to achieve success, a student should follow the rules, work hard, get good education, and get a good job. Merton opines that in the real world, some people are at a disadvantage, especially those who have parents with little formal education and few economic resources with which to create opportunities for themselves. Merton identified five modes of adaptation which individuals use in order to achieve success in the society. They include conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism and rebellion. Only conformity which is the first adaptation involves following the norms, other four modes of adaptation are deviant in nature.

From strain theory perspective, it can be argued that strains or stressors increase the likelihood of negative emotions like anger, fear of carryover courses, confusion and frustration. These negative emotions often make undergraduate students to engage in campus dating to catch some fun and cool their temper. Thus, campus dating may be a method for reducing stress associated with lack of money to buy learning materials and inability to pass examinations. Just as the name implies, strain theory looks at the stressors or problems that students encounter in school that make them to indulge in campus dating. The theory assumes that a negative relationship with bad peers influences socially unacceptable behaviour both at home and in the school. However, strain theory has been criticized for the following reasons; first, the theory best applies to the poor parents as they struggle with limited resources to educate their children, but does not explain how the rich parents are affected. Secondly, Merton`s theory deals with individual forms of responses instead of group activity. As a result, the theory is not very critical of the social structure that it says generated the strain.

Social Learning Theory

The social learning theory was proposed by Albert Bandura in 1961, and it formalized as a theory in 1997. Social learning is the most common way people learn behaviour. Therefore, it has important implications for recovery efforts. Bandura`s social learning theory proposes that learning can occur simply by observing the actions of others. His theory added a social element to other learning theories, arguing that people can learn new information and behaviours by watching other people often known as observational learning (or modelling). This type of learning can be used to explain a wide variety of behaviours such as the effects of alcohol consumption on undergraduates' academic performance.

Social learning theory assumes that undergraduates learn by observing others. It explains how students learn new behaviours, values and attitudes. Thus, undergraduates may be encouraged to engage in campus dating by observing and learning the lifestyle of other students who have turn themselves into womanizers or promiscuity sometimes through movies, the media (such as the internet, television and magazines), parents, age-mates etc directly or indirectly. It is pertinent to emphasize that social interactions that have the greatest influence among undergraduates are those

with the people who are important in their lives as they grow up. This includes peers, parents and other family members. It might also include a lecturer. For instance, students who observe that their parents have secret lovers or have friends that engage in campus dating are likely to engage in the act thinking that; this is the way to go. With little or no regards for the consequence of their actions especially it has been validated by the actions and inactions of their interactive circle. Some students also resort to campus dating just to belong to the league of happening guys or ladies on campus. This theory has been criticized for over flogging the issue of social and environmental influences on the attitudes (campus dating) and behaviour of students in Nigeria while playing down the biological need to get sexual satisfaction from the opposite sex.

A study was carried out by Kayode (2015) to identify the forms of campus dating in Lagos State University. The study adopted mixed methods design, and with the help of 200 respondents comprising male and female undergraduates, found that 32% of the respondents identified monogamous relationship as the popular manifestation of campus dating going on in Lagos State University. In the same vein, 30.3%, 7%, 26.4% and 13.5% of the respondents listed forms (i.e., nature) of campus dating to include distance relationship, friends with benefits, casual friends and polygamous dating or relationship respectively.

A similar study was conducted by Nwobodo (2016) to find out the various nature of campus dating existing in Enugu Metropolis. The researcher adopted mixed methods design and used a sample size of 150 students. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Analysis of the study revealed that majority (55%) of the respondents identified romantic dating as the most popular form of campus dating in Enugu State. The qualitative interview corroborated that romantic dating is common among students because of the influence of western media and cultural infiltration in the last decades. The IDI participants explained that nowadays because of the advent of technology there are dating sites where people meet to discuss and share ideas with geographical or environmental barriers. The study concluded that campus dating has steadily borrowed this modern concept of dating and hence, students hardly concentrate on their studies thereby leading to poor quality of graduates across the Nigerian populace.

Similarly, Odunufe (2017) conducted a study on the manifestations of campus dating in Anambra State University of Science and Technology. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey method. Using a sample size of 200 respondents, the study found that 55% of the respondents opined that campus dating in Anambra State University has assumed a new dimension in recent years, as observed by 23% of the respondents, students often engage in romantic and sometimes open campus dating for fun. The study warned that while deeply in love students dodge lectures, live together like married couples thereby affecting academic performance and leads to school dropout in extreme situations. About 20% of the respondents indicated that in some cases, students are careless about the kind of person they connect with which prompts them to act on grounds of unhealthy peer pressure. The study found that undergraduates in higher institutions of learning are becoming predominantly premarital in their sexual activities. This has made greater number of youths to engage in unprotected sex regardless of their background, educationally and socially. The study submitted that the incidence of student-adolescents or youths engaging in sexual relationships is high and may constitute problems including social, heath, and academic.

Sadiq (2013) conducted a study on the societal implications of campus dating using a survey research design. The study was carried out in Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria. The area of the study is semi-urban. The study comprised of 300 respondents. It was found that peer influences, the

desire for companionship and unavailability of resources to formally consummate marriage are the factors responsible for campus dating and cohabitation among undergraduates. This finding is indicative of the fact that peer influence continues to drive the idea of cohabitation among undergraduate students in the various higher institutions in the country. Kazeem and Oluwasheu (2014) conducted a study on the causes and consequences of campus dating in Ikare Ekiti, an urban area in Ekiti State using a survey research design and 150 respondents. The study found that poverty, lack of discipline, moral decadence and peer influence are factors responsible for campus dating among undergraduates.

Obi and Onyenwe (2015) conducted a study on factors influencing cohabitation and marital stability. The study employed a survey research design with 400 respondents. The study was carried out in Owerri Municipal, an urban area in Imo state. It was found that cohabitation is as a result of lack of the will to take responsibility and get married especially from the men folk. Also, the dilution in the culture of the people as a result of modernization and industrialization is the reason behind cohabitation. It was further found that people cohabit to impress their peers and folks. This study captures the rationale that has continued to fuel the fire of cohabitation among undergraduate students in the country. The identified benefits are the reason students continue to engage in the practice. Saka and Yetunde (2013) conducted a qualitative study on the public perception of campus dating among adults in Ibadan, an urban area. The study employed 50 interviewees. Interview responses from the study show that high libido (sexual drive), moral decadence and irresponsibility are the predisposing factors to cohabitation for adults.

Egwumba (2015) conducted a cross-section study on the effects of campus dating on the academic of students in Onitsha South Local Government Area. Using a sample size of 204, the respondents found that: 78.5% of the respondents indicated that they have poor academic results ever since they started dating the previous semester. The result corroborates the intelligent guess of the researcher, thus approving the hypothesis which suggests that there is a significant relationship between campus dating and poor academic performance. It follows therefore that campus dating has a significant negative effect on the academic performance of students. The results showed that the GPAs of undergraduates who engage in campus dating were 0.4 points lower on average for males and females. It was found that the effect of romantic affairs on campus on GPA peaked for ninth graders and declined thereafter and that dating affected GPA more by reducing the likelihood of high grades than by increasing the likelihood of low grades.

In view of the assertion of the above scholars in their their theoretical empirical reviews, the paper finally recommends that parents should devote more attention to training their children and monitoring the type of internet facilities and friends they interact with in the school and at home. Tertiary Institutions should control the dressing mode and other romantic activities, especially cohabitation of their students. The Government should sensor the types of films and movies displayed in this country.

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