

## **Role of Religion in Combating Hook up Practice among the Undergraduate Students in Kwara State: Challenges and Way Forward**

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### **Abstract**

All heavenly recognized religions on the earth do not confine their discussions to religious aspects of life and disregard other aspects but they spread their discussions all over including creation of special awareness to the danger associated with un-marital and transactional sex. It is against this background that the study examined the role of religions in curbing hook up practices among undergraduate students in Kwara State, Nigeria. The historical, analytical and phenomenological methods of research were used to do justice to this work. The historical method was used to discuss the historical background of hook up in Kwara State, the analytical approach was used to analyse the role of religions in combating hook up practice among undergraduate students while the phenomenological method was used to determine the trends of hook up in our contemporary society among undergraduate students. The findings of this study revealed that the practice of hook up had a significant negative impact on female life and the religious awareness on the effects of the illicit act is not encouraging. It was concluded in the study that the practice of hook up is a rebranded prostitute that have detrimental effects on female undergraduate students. It is therefore suggested in this study that MSSN and other religious organizations coupled with the support of the government should organize sensitization gatherings, seminars and workshops on the effects of hook up practice on the life of undergraduate female students.

**Key Words:** Religious scholars, hook up, combating, undergraduate students, Kwara State

### **Introduction**

The act of engaging in illicit intercourse among the young adults for making money has become modern civilization in Nigeria. According to Ayotola, Haruna, Abdussalam, & Abiodun (2020) hook up is the illegal relationship constituted nowadays among undergraduate students and young adults through sending online romantic messages, photos and pictures. Lamentably, this implies that sexing, transactional sex and a host of others are among the common practices among the young adults in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Similarly, hook up is illegal pre-marital consolidation widely practiced among

undergraduate students in Nigerian tertiary institutions via sending raunchy messages, self-naked displaying photos, snapping sexually explicit images and pictures to their proposed clients or customers with the aid of phones (Bolanle, Olayori, & Idowu, 2022).

Furthermore, Wylegly (2019) defined hook up as rebranded prostitution of the early age to suit the demand of current young adults. Wylegly (2019) explained further that the old method of the prostitution and the new share some features which include, frequent change of customers/partners, financial benefits and emotional indifference. Also, Ajayi, (2017) presented hook up practice as the illegal relationship commonly practiced among young adults and it is purposively built on economic buoyancy, social capital and material supports accumulation. Therefore, Oyeoku, Ibezim, Agwu, & Okoye, (2022) noted that the motives surrounding undergraduate students' engagement in this illicit act could be summarized as acquisition of social status, capital improvement, luxury needs, excellent grade and sexual satisfaction.

All prominent religions in Nigeria discourage practicing adultery and fornication and symbolize it as sinful and illegal act that destroy devotees' personality, their families and the entire family. Qur-'ān says:

“Nor come nigh to adultery: for it is a shameful (deed) and an evil, opening the road (to other evils) (17:32).”

On this note, Imam ibn Katheer (1999) explained that adultery or fornication is a great evil that led people to other forms of evils in the society. Yusuf (2010) similarly, commented that adultery or fornication is not only shameful on itself but it destroys consistency, personality, respect and originality among others in fornicator and adulterer. It showed from the above scholastic commentaries on the nature of adultery or fornication which is rebranded in this modern society to denote “hook up” that participating in it will devalue perpetrators socially, religiously and morally to mention a few.

Furthermore, there are many portions of Bible that condemn this act due to it is ability to endanger not only the adulterer or fornicator but also the children, family and entire society.

## **Historical Background of Hook up in Nigeria Tertiary Institutions**

Historically, hook up is a deceivable word adopted to describe physical sexual activities between sexual partners with the aim of getting financial benefits, social recognition, and sexual satisfaction (Oyeku, et al. 2022). The practice of prostitution which had been in existence among opposite sex in Nigeria for long is now rebranded and metamorphosed to hook up or friend with benefits among undergraduate students in Nigeria. Ajayi (2017) explained that prostitution rebranded has been getting momentum in our tertiary institutions nowadays especially among female gender due to lack of financial support from the parents or guardians. This implies that female undergraduate students in the tertiary institutions in Nigeria had seen this abnormality as alternative for getting livelihood and way of generating funds for their survival and educational attainment.

Bogle (2008) explained that historical evolution of hooking up can be traced to 1960s when dating became permitted tradition among college students. In the same vein, Armstrong et al. (2009) and England et al., (2008) submitted that the trends of rebranded prostitution in Nigeria tertiary institutions had gone beyond controlled. They claimed that this sinful practice became popular around 1980s. It is reliable that hooking up is not a new practice in Nigeria but designing it in another fantastic and captivating ways had ever been taught.

In order to logically and systematically present the evolutionary of hook up among undergraduate students in Nigeria, Heldman and Wade (2010) categorized the practice into oral, anal and vaginal sexes. Oral sex was very common among the young people in Nigeria before 1992 when civilization transformed and destroyed our culture. This type of sex was practiced especially among 18-24 years old before the practice graduated to anal-vaginal sex around 2004 among 18-39 years. Furthermore, Ajayi (2017) submitted that prostitution became rebranded and modernised among undergraduate students particularly during COVID-19 pandemic when many parents lost their job and the life became unpleasant for them. The painful situation of that period pushed the young ladies in the campus to design possible way out for getting satisfaction.

Furthermore, the issue of un-marital sexual intercourse had been practiced in Nigeria for long, especially around 1960 when women began to lose dignity and sense of honour (Oyeoku, 2014). During this period, support for freedom of sex became new ideas and beliefs

among Nigerian women to the level that a single woman would have as many as possible men friends cohabitating her for money and sexual satisfaction. However, it implies from the submission that hookup is not a new practice in Nigeria; the only thing that differentiate prostitution from hookup is modernization. The use of technologies of different types is among the instruments adopted by hookers up in Nigeria.

Introduction and application of different strategies and techniques in to the practice among undergraduate students in Nigeria makes it different from the old fashion. On this note, Heldman and Wade (2010) explained that the old was just sexual satisfaction for benefits not unrealistic dating and immoral causal sexual relationship. Garcial and Reiber (2008) pointed out that during personal observation one third of undergraduate students confirmed that their first time of having intercourse was through hooking up. Heldman and Wade (2010) submitted that the major factors that contributed to the hike in the practice of hooking up among undergraduate students in Nigeria now are:

1. University and College policies
2. Gender distribution of university and college students
3. Poor control of nature and type drugs the students consume
4. Free access to pornographic media
5. Modern design in self-objectification
6. Increase narcissism level in the name of sexual satisfaction
7. Introduction of new phase to marriage norms in Nigeria
8. Development of mixing feelings and perception for sexual risk

Furthermore, Wylegly (2019) stated that the factors responsible for the increase in the numbers of undergraduate students practicing hooking up in Nigeria tertiary institutions can be folded under the following:

9. Biological and physiological factors
  - a. A very large disparities between the two genders dwelling in the campus
  - b. Unexpected rapid changes in the physical appearance of the two gender
  - c. Indecent appearance showcased mostly by female counterpart
10. Environmental and cultural factors
  - a. Nature of policies governing university environment
  - b. Emulation of bad culture

- c. Freedom of navigating your ways as you wish is the order of the campus
- 11. Economic factors
  - a. Difficult financial situation during studies
  - b. Parental economic dissatisfaction
- 12. Capability factors
  - a. Laziness in the part of weak students
  - b. Means of getting marks from the lecturers
  - c. Willingness to take rough path to arrive at the destination

### **Effects of Hooking up in the life of undergraduate students in Nigeria**

Numerous studies had confirmed that danger associated with hookup is more than the benefits. The gravity of regret which undergraduate students nurse after being graduated from the university is enormous. Many of them graduated from the school with series of deadly diseases due to the immoral practice that put them at a very risky of sexually transmitted diseases and not last long relationship (Ajayi et al. 2017). According to Ayotola, et al. (2023) explained that the negative consequences of hooking up can be summed up under the following: indiscriminate urge for sex, development of unrefined attitude towards sex, personal embarrassment, loss of dignity and honour and the host of others. Eke et al. (2022) stated that the consequences of practicing hooking up include: easy access to transmitted diseases, development of emotional trauma especially for a lady who is not willing to undertake it, possibility of having as many as possible partners at hand, it may result to unwanted pregnancy and the host of others.

Hooking up's effect does not limit to transmission of diseases but also extend to disappearance of sexual satisfaction which is likely to be more dangerous. This according to Ayotola et al. (2023) promotes lesbianism, gay, bisexualism and transgender and nowadays the practices are very common among the teenagers.

### **Roles of Religion in Combating Hooking up Practice among Undergraduate Students in Nigeria**

Religion is a significant weapon for shaping individual's life right from the birth till death. Religion should be the monitor and manager of every stage of individual's life in order to gain progress in this life and forgiveness in the next life. Somefun (2019) described religion as a system of belief that usually have varying influences on individual's

behaviour, manners, attitudes and the host of others. According to Waheedullah (2016) religion is a foundation of morality and belief which serves as internal and external forces for controlling individual's life. Eliade (2010) similarly defined religion as a unified system of beliefs and practices that normally brings together people of different tribes. In the same vein, Deton (2006) conceived religion as a sacred relationship between man and God. Similarly, Gallagber and Tierney (2013) presented religion as individual's beliefs, spirituality and his reverence towards the Creator. This implies that application and practicability of religious teachings perfectly and effectively to promote positive changes in life is what is meant by religion. Owojuyigbe and Busari (2014) submitted that religion always influences people's thoughts, ideology and their perspectives.

Osalusi and Alonge (2020) maintained that religious inclination significantly influences university students' values and moral behaviours. Okon (2012) stated that Nigerian society is devaluing and frustrating through poor socialization and culture. Owojuyigbe and Busari (2014) also commented that university environment is expected to be well planned to play vital roles in fostering moral and value education that could prevent undergraduate students from all irrational behaviours.

Significantly, religion promotes individual's dignity and preserves his personality. This submission is similar to the statement of Somefun (2019) that religion makes one survives during hardship and difficult situations without committing atrocities. Harry (2006) also stated that religion strengthens solidarity among people and promotes norms of social system. Wachukwu (2019) also observed that religion is a powerful means of providing responses to individual's hardship and pains and promoting moral values through which humanity prevails and nation develops. Ayotola, et al. (2022) also claimed that religion promotes high moral standard such as honesty, dignity, decency, selflessness, perseverance, obedience and respect. It shows from the above submissions that religion is what that can strengthen moral values and weaken the power of social vices in the society.

Religion is an effective weapon for correcting social vices among the teenagers and youths in Nigeria. According to Somefun (2019), inability to practice religion effectively had contributed to the increase in the numbers of youths and teenagers participating in risky sexual activity and unwanted pregnancy. Owojuyigbe and Busari (2014)

concluded in their study that religion is a power mechanism that can sets difference between deviance and control, chaos and order, dispute and resolution, change and maintenance status quo. Therefore, religion is expected to use as instrument for fighting against social vices, deviance, chaos and a host of others in the society. According Oyeoku (2014), religious practices should be geared towards moral and spiritual development.

Somefun (2019) opined that the process of having strength in religious beliefs and practices is among the major steps for combating transactional sex among the students in Nigeria. The researcher concluded that religiosity is a powerful tool for controlling illicit sexual practices among the students in Nigerian institutions. Comfort et al. (2011) corroborated the view stating that religion organizations in collaboration with policy makers would bring solution to this problem of hook up practice. Wylegly (2019) concluded that many undergraduate students especially female practice hook up due to lack of sex education, poverty and poor religious orientation. In the same vein, Oyeoku, et al. (2022) concluded in their study that lack of moral standard, parental disconnectedness, gender, peer group influence, family poor economic background among others contributed to the hike of hook up practice among undergraduate students in Nigeria.

Heldman and Wade (2010) similarly, concluded that hook up practice is becoming favourable practice among undergraduate students due to inconsistent gender distribution of students, lack of working religion organization, incessant changing in the usage of sex enhancing drugs, consumption of pornography, newly invented marriage norms and to mention a few.

Family poor economic background contributes to the high rate of hook up practice among students in the country. It is pertinent to note that the practice is getting favourable acceptance among undergraduate students majorly because of poor practice of religion and confusing perspectives about the effects of sexual transmitted diseases. Wolfson and Leung (2020) submitted that poor parenting, lack of supervision from the parent and other guidance, mass media and peer pressure are factors that contributed to the curbing of the menace of hook up among the youths.

## **Factors Hindering Success of Religion in Combating Hook up in Nigeria**

Religion is an instrument of change if it is well practiced. Awolalu (2010) explained that religion is capable of promoting high moral, social and spiritual standard of youths across the country. Consistency, respect, obedience, honesty, credibility, and modesty among others would be promoted in the society through proper practice of religion (Wachukwu, 2019). Many factors are attributed to the failure of religion in controlling hook up practice among the youths especially university students in Nigeria which include: poor method of religion propagation, poor implementation of religion policies, lack of good and pious traditional leaders, bad governance and corruption (Wachukwu, 2019).

Poor method of religion evangelism is one of the factors hindering the success of religion in combating hook up in Nigeria. Erinola, Timothy, Edime and Mejiyan (2004) stated that potential extremism, media and communication challenges, inter religious tension as well as credibility and trust issues are some of the factors that hinder the success of the religion in striving against the menace of hook up practices in Nigeria. Amy, Christopher, Terrence and Norval (2009) examined the impact of both individual and institutional religious involvement on “hooking up” in a national sample of college women. The study revealed that women who attend higher institutions with religious affiliations are more into hooking up than those without religious affiliation. This may be attributed to poor method of religion propagation.

Similarly, among those factors that hindered religion from combating hook up practices among the youths in Nigeria is the poor implementation of religious policies. The role of faith leaders in the kicking against hook up can never be underestimated. The positions of some religious bodies are most important factor in determining the position of girls in a variety of activities, including finishing school, marriage and gaining access to health services, but is rarely provided and even discussed (Christian Aid, 2016). Hence, to combat the menace of hook up, the leadership of the various religious bodies in the country such as Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Jama’atu Nasril Islam (JNI) and other congregations to intensifying their efforts against hook up practices in the country.

The backlash effects of poor traditional leadership, corruption, bad governance and traditional leaders constitutes a threat to the fight against hook up practices among the youths on campus. The fear of



carry over, poverty, immoralities from the community leaders and poor mentorship and host of others are all common factors hindering the success against hook up practices among undergraduates in Nigeria. It is worthy of note that hook up could lead to illicit sexual intercourse. Asrese and Mekonnen (2018), who asserted that promiscuous sexual behaviours frequently lead to outcomes like unintended pregnancy and STIs. Asyraaf and Badayai (2022) also supported this when he revealed that most students engage in unprotected vaginal, oral, or anal intercourse with consequences such as higher risk of STIs, including HIV and unintended pregnancy.

According to Shittu (2012) typical example of right method for propagating religion was numerously displayed by the Prophet (Peace be upon him) during the propagation of Islam through assisting the needy, feeding the hungry ones, rescuing the losers and giving the less privileged among people living in Madinah. Similar practices were recorded from past scholars from different parts of the state in Nigeria and outside Nigeria. This implied that religious leaders of this period propagate religion with instruments such as exotic cars, beautiful houses, expensive clothes and hypocrisy that will not promote love, peace and unity. Furthermore, Wachukwu (2019) submitted that corruption of higher level has uprooted piety, faith, sincerity, and modesty to mention a few from the lives of Nigerian youths including university students. However, recognizing the inevitable significance of peace, tolerance, justice, charity, selflessness, self-denial, and dignity among others in practicing and propagation of religion will assist both religion and traditional leaders work together to rehabilitate the youths and sensitise them on the effect of hook up on their lives and entire society (Zayed & Harbi, 2020).

### **Conclusion**

It is concluded in this study that the practice of hook up is a rebranded prostitute that have detrimental effects on female undergraduate students.

### **Suggestion**

Based on the submissions stated above, the following are the suggestions that need due attention:

13. Policy makers in collaboration with religion organisations should fight against the practice in the campus

14. Religious scholars in the society should wake up and strategise an effective way out for the reduction of the practice among undergraduate students in Nigeria
15. Parents should priorities moral teaching and sexual education

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