

## **Prevalence of Hookup Culture and its Consequences on Psychosocial and Academic Development of Female Undergraduates**

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**ABSTRACT:** Hookup culture is one that accepts and encourages casual sex encounters, including one-night stand and other related activity, without necessarily including emotional intimacy, bonding or committed relationship. The prevalence vices, especially hookup culture is of great concern to many educational stakeholders. Therefore, this study is investigated prevalence and effects of hookup culture among female undergraduates in Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Purposive and volunteer sampling techniques were used to select 150 respondents from female students across colleges in Tai Solarin University of Education. Self-structured questionnaire titled “Prevalence and Effects of Hookup culture among Female Undergraduates (PEHCFU) was used to collect data from respondents. Analysis of the data was carried out using the simple percentage and frequency table to analyze the questions while mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the research questions. The result showed that financial difficulties, peer pressure, coercion influenced female undergraduates to engage in hookup culture all played significant roles in encouraging or normalizing hookup culture among undergraduates. Evidence also shows that engaging in hookup often has a detrimental effect on both the academic development and social interaction. It was recommended that educational Institutions should introduce comprehensive sex education programs to provide students with essential information on safe sex, consent, and the consequences of hookup culture.

**KEYWORD:** Academic Development, Female Undergraduates, Hookup culture, Social Development.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Many tertiary institutions students have perceived their admission into tertiary institutions as opportunities to gain freedom from their parents, especially the strict and highly protective ones. The joy many of these students have when they receive the news of their admission was not only because they would be advancing their academic career, but because they would leave their parents and guardians for some times. Some leave them for ever as they are gainfully employed and live independently from their parents after school years. The independence students gain for living alone in school has given many of them freedoms to do whatever they like and to go wherever they want, knowing fully that they are no more under the direct supervision or directives of their significant order. The consciousness of being free from their parents and guardians make many of the tertiary institution students engage in many vices within and outside their school premises and hostels. Many undergraduates engage in drug abuse, cultism, cybercrime, examination malpractice, sexual harassment, prostitution, hooliganism and academic dishonesty. It was also observed that vices that were common among young male and female students in tertiary institutions include prostitution, indecent dressing, robbery, cultism, pocket picking, drug addiction, examination malpractice, hooliganism, thuggery, gambling, smoking, pre-marital sexual activities and rape (Steemit, 2018).

The proliferation of vices among students in tertiary institutions has become a pressing concern for stakeholders. The engagement of students in these vices has deleterious consequences for their well-being and, in some cases, affects others. A significant vice prevalent among undergraduate students, particularly females, is prostitution. The phenomenon of student prostitution in tertiary institutions across the country has sparked widespread concern. The term "prostitution" has been rebranded as "hookup culture" (The Nation, October 28, 2021). However, the definition of hookup culture remains ambiguous, with varying interpretations among scholars. Some define it as a casual sexual encounter (Eshbaugh & Gute, 2008; Penhollow, Young & Bailey, 2007), while others describe it as a non-romantic sexual relationship (Garcia & Reiber, 2008). Klinger (2016) broadens the definition to encompass a range

of sexual behaviors, including kissing and penetrative intercourse. Fundamentally, hookup culture refers to sexual interactions between partners without a romantic relationship (Fielder & Carey, 2010).

Hookup culture is a phenomenon that normalizes and encourages casual sexual encounters, including one-night stands, without necessarily involving emotional intimacy, bonding, or committed relationships (Freitas, 2013). Hookups are brief, uncommitted sexual interactions between individuals who are not romantic partners or dating each other. The term hookup has a nuanced definition, encompassing various physical sexual activities, including kissing (Dye, 2011; Wolfe, 2013). This concept has been prevalent in the US since at least 2000 and is also referred to as non-relationship sex or sex without dating (Michigan Population Studies Centre, 2006). Hookups can range from kissing to sexual intercourse (Thorpes & Kuperberg, 2021). According to Iproject (2024), hookup culture is characterized by casual, brief, and non-committal sexual encounters between individuals, typically without the expectation of forming a long-term romantic relationship. This phenomenon has become increasingly prominent in contemporary society, particularly among young adults, and has sparked extensive academic, cultural, and social discussions.

Consistent with the arguments presented by Dye (2011) and Wolfe (2013), Napper, Kenney, and LaBrie (2016) posit that hookups encompass a range of sexual activities, including kissing, oral sex, manual stimulation, and sexual intercourse. Hooking up is characterized by sexual intimacy, which is often viewed as a liberating experience. However, hookup culture is perceived by some as oppressive and monolithic, with intimacy confined to a specific context (Chatelaine, 2013). Broadly defined, hooking up refers to engaging in sexual activities with someone outside of a committed relationship. These encounters can be one-time events or recurring experiences with the same individual(s). The decision to engage in hookups is a personal choice (Kids Help Phone, 2023).

Aubrey and Smith (2016) discovered that, despite minimal differences in hookup behavior and frequency between genders, women still face a significant social stigma. While men's social status increases with multiple sexual partners, women's social status decreases. Kuperberg and Padgett (2016) noted a disparity in the motivations behind male and female students' engagement in casual sex. Men primarily seek to gain sexual experience and affirm their masculinity, whereas women hope to secure a long-term relationship and satisfy their partner. Research indicates variability in the prevalence of hookups among college students, ranging from 40% (Kuperberg & Padgett, 2016) to 60% (Kuperberg & Padgett, 2016) and 72% (England et al., 2008) across different populations and timeframes. Recent studies suggest that hookups have become as common as traditional dates, with students reporting more hookup experiences than dates (Kuperberg & Padgett, 2016). Thus, hookups have become a normative experience for most college students (England et al., 2008; Garcia et al., 2012).

Research has identified a significant correlation between alcohol consumption and hookup culture among students. Fielder and Carey (2010) conducted a study involving 118 first-semester undergraduate students, revealing that 64% of participants reported alcohol presence in their hookup encounters. Furthermore, Klinger (2016) cited Downing-Matibag and Geisinger's (2009) qualitative study of 71 undergraduate students, where 80% of participants reported using alcohol as a facilitator for their most recent hookup. Moreover, Thorpe and Kuperberg (2021) suggested that the expectation to party during college may directly motivate students to engage in hookups, and substance use can also drive students to pursue hookups as a means to achieve the perceived 'full college experience'.

Adolescents and emerging adults engage in hookup culture for a diverse range of reasons, spanning from seeking instant physical gratification to fulfilling emotional needs, and even as a means of potentially finding a long-term romantic partner. The media's reaction to this phenomenon is often characterized as moral panic (Dye, 2011). Some individuals may choose to participate in hookups to experience new or different sexual encounters, explore their sexuality, or assess their sexual chemistry with someone. Others may hook up to initiate a romantic relationship, feel emotionally connected or close to someone, or simply to engage in sexual activity (Kids Help Phone, 2023). The motivations underlying hookup culture are complex and multifaceted, reflecting various aspects of human sexuality and relationships.

Research has illuminated the detrimental effects of hookup culture on students. Fielder and Carey (2009) posited that hookups yield adverse outcomes for participants, compromising both mental and physical well-being, which in turn, impacts social interactions. A survey of 1,468 undergraduate students conducted by the American Psychological Association (2024) revealed that 82.6% of respondents experienced negative mental and emotional consequences, including embarrassment, loss of respect, and difficulties maintaining steady relationships. Moreover, 78% of women and 72% of men who engaged in uncommitted sex reported regret afterwards. Furthermore, participants in hookup culture exhibited lower overall self-esteem scores compared to those who abstained. Sergent (2023) found a correlation between hookup engagement, number of partners, and increased symptoms of depression and anxiety - severe mental health disorders with potentially devastating consequences.

Furthermore, the impact of hookup culture on academic performance is a pressing concern in the academic community. Managing casual relationships while fulfilling educational responsibilities can lead to distractions, hindering academic success, and necessitating a delicate balance between personal and academic pursuits (iproject, 2024). Fielder and Carey (2009) posited that hookups have detrimental effects on students, including limiting their ability to explore educational and career opportunities that could benefit them personally. Friedlander et al. (2007) also found that hookups can affect students' mental health, which in turn, can impact academic achievement and performance. Against this backdrop, the researchers investigated the prevalence and effects of hookup culture on the academic and social development of female undergraduates at Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, Ogun State, Nigeria

## **2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The general objective of this study is to investigate the prevalence and effects of hookup culture on academic and social developments of female undergraduates in Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun. The specific objectives are to;

- i. To identify the prevalence of hookup culture among female undergraduates in Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun.
- ii. To determine the factors that contribute to the prevalence of hookup culture among female undergraduates in Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun.
- iii. To investigate the effects of hookup culture on the academic pursuit of female undergraduates in Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun.
- iv. To investigate the effects of hookup culture on the social interaction of female undergraduates with others in Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun.

## **3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The following questions were formulated and answered in this study

- i. What is the prevalence of hookup culture among female undergraduates in Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun?
- ii. What are the factors that contribute to the prevalence of hookup culture among female undergraduates in Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun?
- iii. What are the effects of hookup culture on the academics of female undergraduates in Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun?
- iv. What are the effects of hookup culture on the social interaction of female undergraduates in Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun?

## **4. RESEARCH METHODS**

This study made use of descriptive survey design for the purpose of data gathering and analysis of the study. The population of this study was all the female students of Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun (TASUED). Purposive and volunteer sampling techniques were used to select a sample of one hundred and fifty (150) female

students from Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun Ogun State. Purposive sampling was used because the researchers deliberately chose female students that were used as participants in the study. Female students that did go to night clubs were considered first. Hence, before participants were given the instrument, they were asked if they did attend night clubs. More so, some female undergraduates that were not approached but heard about the study, willingly self-selected themselves to participate. This might be because they also attended night clubs. The instrument used for the collection of data for the study was a structured and close-ended questionnaire titled “Prevalence and Effects of Hookup Culture among Female Undergraduates Questionnaire”. The questionnaire was developed by the researcher in line with the research questions in order to provide answers to them and to achieve the objectives of the research. The questionnaire is divided into two sections. Section A was designed to elicit information on the respondents’ demographic details, such as age and levels, while section B was designed using 4 points Likert Scale in line with the research questions of the study. In this section, the researchers got responses to the research questions by proposing some statements that respondents attended to.

Copies of questionnaire were administered by the researcher with the aid of a research assistant. The need for the assistance is to guarantee prompt retrieval of the questionnaires after administration. In administering the questionnaires, the researcher and assistant explained the essence of the research to the respondents and assured them of confidentiality before they responded to the questions raised. The questionnaire was subjected to both face and content validity in which errors and mistakes were corrected and suggestions were integrated in the scale. The reliability of the instrument was tested by administering thirty copies of the instrument to a set of respondents in another school which is outside the area of study. The data was subjected to statistical analysis using Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient, and 0.82 was obtained, which revealed that the items had high reliability value. Descriptive statistics, that is, standard deviation was used to analyse data collected from the survey. Frequency counts and simple percentages were used to present demographic data in tables for easy comprehension. Research questions were analysed using Mean and standard deviation.

## 5. RESULTS ANALYSIS

Table 1: Age of the Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percent
16-20 years	24	16.0
21-25 years	76	50.7
25 – 30 years	50	33.3
Total	150	100.0

Table1 shows the ages of the respondents. The table reveals that respondents who are between ages 16 to 20 years are 16 percent, respondents in age range 21-25 years are 50.7 percent while 25- 30 years are 33.3 percent and none of the respondents were above 30 years old. The result shows that majority of the respondents in this study are within ages 21 to 25 years thus, they are old enough to comprehend and respond to the issues raised in this study.

Table 2: Level of the Respondents

Level	Frequency	Percent
100Level	24	16.0
201level	45	30.0
300level	24	16.0
400level	57	38.0
Total	150	100.0

Table 2 shows the level of the respondents. The table reveals that respondents who are in 100 level are 16.0 percent, respondents in 200 level are 30 percent, 300 level are 16 percent, while those in 400 level are 38 percent. The result shows that majority of the respondents in this study are from 400 level and 200 Level. This implies that hookup culture is prevalent among all levels, but more common to 400 level students. This may be because they stayed longer than others in school.

Table 3: College of the Respondents

College	Frequency	Percent
COHUM	38	25.3
COSIT	41	27.3
COSMAS	26	17.3
COSPED	29	19.3
COVTED	16	10.7
Total	150	100.0

Table 3 shows the colleges of the respondents. The table reveals that respondents who are in College of Humanities are 25.3 percent, respondents in College of Science and Information Technology are 27.3 percent, College of Social and Management Sciences are 17.3 percent, College of Specialised and Professional Education are 19.3 percent while those at College of Vocational and Technology Education are 10.7 percent. The result shows that majority of the respondents in this study are in College of Science and Information Technology, however, the percentages of other colleges participation in the study are relatively close. The implication may be because science students need more finance to laboratory experiments and practical in their different disciplines than students from other colleges. They need more income to buy equipment for practical, etc. This findings corroborates the findings of Harun (2011) who states that women engage in prostitution as a result of poverty, un-employment and other social conventions.

Table 4: Religion of Respondents

Religion	Frequency	Percent
Islam	80	53.3
Christian	67	44.7
Traditional	3	2
Total	150	100.0

Table 4 shows the religion of the respondents. The table reveals that 53.3 percent of the respondents are Muslim, 44.7 percent are Christians while 3 percent are of traditional faith. The table revealed that majority of the respondents are Muslims and this implies that many muslim female students engage in hookup culture, this may be because they were not committed muslim or Christians. Harun (2011) in his study on Impact of Cultural and Religious Practices of Prostitution on the Trafficking of Women in India, revealed that religion contributed to promiscuity among women.

Table 5: Ethnicity of Respondents

Ethnicity	Frequency	Percent
Hausa	-	-
Igbo	7	4.6
Yoruba	143	95.3
Total	150	100.0

Table 5 shows the ethnicity of the respondents. The table reveals that 95.3 percent of the respondents are Yoruba, 4.6 percent are Igbo while none of the respondents is Hausa. The table reveals that majority of the respondents are

Yoruba. This may be because the school used for the study is located in Yoruba land, and many students that were admitted were Yoruba indigenes.

**6. ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

**Research Question One:** What is the prevalence of hookup culture among female undergraduates in Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun?

Table 6: Prevalence of Hookup culture among Female Undergraduates

S/No	Prevalence of hookup culture among Female Undergraduates	Mean	SD	Remarks
1.	Hookup culture among female undergraduates is rampant	2.73	1.08	Accepted
2.	I have personally encountered or witnessed instances of hookup among female undergraduates	2.58	1.08	Accepted
3.	Hookup culture among female undergraduates has increased in recent years in my school	2.54	1.09	Accepted
4.	Many girls are not ashamed to engage in hookup	2.60	.99	Accepted
5	Hookup culture is not a big deal among female undergraduates	2.61	1.05	Accepted

In table 6 above, mean score of 2.73 was above the cut-off point of 2.50, indicating that hookup culture among female undergraduates is rampant, mean of 2.58 indicates that respondents have personally engaged or witnessed instances of hookup among female undergraduates. 2.54 mean indicated that hookup has increased in recent years, 2.60 mean indicated that many female girls are not ashamed to engage in hookup, meaning that those involving in hook-ups are known to others, while mean of 2.61 indicated that engaging in hookup culture is not a big deal among female undergraduates.

**Research Question Two:** What are the factors that contribute to the prevalence of hookup culture among female undergraduates?

Table 7: Factors that contribute to the prevalence of hookup culture among female undergraduates

S/No	Factors that Contribute to the Prevalence of hookup Culture among Female Undergraduates	Mean	SD	Remarks
6.	Financial difficulties and the high cost of education drive some female undergraduates to engage in hook-ups	3.03	.91	Accepted
7.	Female undergraduates engage in hookups for instant physical gratification and fulfillment of emotional needs.	2.86	.90	Accepted
8	Pressure from peers or social circles plays a role in encouraging or normalizing hookups among female undergraduates who want to fit in or maintain certain social standards.	2.67	.98	Accepted
9.	Some undergraduates are coerced or exploited by individuals or criminal networks into engaging in hook-ups	3.05	.88	Accepted
10.	Popularity and acceptability of hookup culture encourage some undergraduates to engage in sex commercialization	2.92	.86	Accepted

In table 7 above, mean score of 3.03 was above the cutoff point of 2.50, this indicated that financial difficulties and the high cost of education drive some undergraduates to engage in hookup culture, and it is seen as a quick way to earn money, mean of 2.86 indicated that instant physical gratification and fulfillment of emotional needs are considered as reasons for involvement in hookup culture, 2.67 mean indicated that pressure from peers or social

circles plays a role in encouraging or hookup culture among female undergraduates who want to fit in or maintain certain social standards, 3.05 mean indicated that some female undergraduates may be coerced or exploited by individuals or criminal networks into engaging in hookup culture, while mean of 2.92 indicated that popularity and acceptability of hookup culture encourage some female undergraduates to engage in it.

**Research Question Three:** What are the effects of hookup culture on the academics of female undergraduates?

Table 8: Impacts of hookup culture on the academics of female undergraduates

S/No	Effects of Hookup Culture on Academic Pursuit of Female Undergraduates	Mean	SD	Remark
11.	Engaging in hookup often requires a significant amount of time and effort, which can distract one from the time available for academic studies.	3.01	.83	Accepted
12.	The emotional and psychological toll of hookup culture can be distracting, making it difficult for students to focus on their studies.	2.80	.91	Accepted
13.	Female students involved in hookup may miss classes and other academic activities on campus due to the demands of their work.	2.73	.96	Accepted
14.	The burden of meeting up with the engagement of hookup may be so overwhelming and can affect students' ability to concentrate and perform well academically	2.61	.93	Accepted
15	Hookup is a distraction and prevents students from focusing on their studies, hence, affecting their academic achievements and performances.	2.80	.98	Accepted

In table 8 above, mean score of 3.01, 2.80, 2.73, 2.61 and 2.80 were all above the cutoff point of 2.50 which indicated that all the items were accepted by the respondents. The standard deviation of 0.83 to 0.96 shows a degree of closeness among the responses. The results show that hookup is a distraction from studies and other academic activities.

**Research Question Four:** What are the impacts of hookup culture on social development of female undergraduates?

Table 9: Impacts of Hookup Culture on the social Interactions of female students

S/No	Impacts of Hookup Culture on Female Undergraduates' Social Development	Mean	SD	Remark
21	Female students engaged in hookup culture often face stigmatization and discrimination from peers	3.02	.93	Accepted
22	The need to keep their involvement in hookup a secret may lead to increased secrecy and a sense of isolation.	2.78	.87	Accepted
23	The stress and emotional toll of hookup can strain existing friendships and relationships	2.88	.88	Accepted
24	Female students engaging in hookup as a result of peer influence can normalize sex work within their groups.	2.58	.92	Accepted
25	The need for secrecy and the social stigma associated with hookup can contribute to feelings of loneliness.	2.80	1.02	Accepted

In table 9 above, mean score of 3.02, 2.78, 2.88, 2.58 and 2.80 were all above the cutoff point of 2.50 which indicated that all the items were accepted by the respondents. The standard deviation of 0.88 to 1.02 shows a degree of closeness among the responses. The implication of this is that female students engaged in hookup often face stigmatization and discrimination from peers, the need to keep their involvement in hookup a secret may lead to increased secrecy and a sense of isolation, the stress and emotional toll of hookup can strain existing friendships and relationships, female students engaging in hookup as a result of peer influence can normalize hookup within their groups and the need for secrecy and the social stigma associated with hookup can contribute to feelings of loneliness.

## 7. DISCUSSION

This study suggests that hookup culture is prevalent among female undergraduates, consistent with previous research. Kuperberg and Padgett (2016) reported varying hookup rates across different populations and timeframes, ranging from 40% among women in earlier studies to 60% among all undergraduate students, and 72% among seniors (England et al., 2008). Recent findings indicate that students now engage in hookups as frequently as traditional dating, with a higher reported incidence of hookup experiences compared to dates (Kuperberg and Padgett, 2016). These findings collectively underscore the significance of hookup culture in the college population.

The findings suggest that financial constraints and the high cost of education prompt some female undergraduates to engage in hookup culture, viewing it as a means of financial expediency. This corroborates Harun's (2011) assertion that women often resort to hookups due to poverty, unemployment, and societal pressures. The results also indicate that instant physical gratification and emotional fulfillment are motivations for participating in hookup culture, consistent with Dye's (2011) findings. Additionally, peer pressure and the desire to conform to social norms drive some female undergraduates to engage in hookup culture, as noted by Edward (2022), who suggests that women may seek empowerment through sexual gratification. Moreover, the widespread acceptance and normalization of hookup culture encourage some female undergraduates to participate, leading many to view hookups as a viable means of sustenance rather than immoral behavior.

The findings suggest that engaging in hookup culture requires a substantial investment of time and effort, which can divert attention away from academic studies, leading to missed classes, poor academic performance, and decreased focus on academic activities. This supports Fielder and Carey's (2009) assertion that the time devoted to hookups can limit students' ability to pursue educational and career opportunities that would personally benefit them. Additionally, the results align with Friedlander et al.'s (2007) findings that hookup culture can impact students' mental health, which in turn affects their academic achievement and performance. These findings collectively highlight the potential consequences of hookup culture on students' academic success and well-being.

The findings also reveal the detrimental effects of hookup culture on the social development and interactions of female students. The results show that female students who engage in hookups often face stigmatization and discrimination from their peers, leading to negative mental and emotional consequences, such as embarrassment, loss of respect, and difficulties maintaining steady relationships (American Psychological Association, 2024). The need for secrecy surrounding hookup involvement may lead to increased isolation and loneliness. Furthermore, normalizing hookup culture within peer groups may exacerbate these negative consequences, as the number of hookup partners is linked to increased symptoms of depression and anxiety (Sergent, 2023). These findings are consistent with Friedlander et al.'s (2007) assertion that hookup culture can affect students' mental health, which in turn impacts academic achievement and performance. The results collectively highlight the far-reaching consequences of hookup culture on female students' social development, mental health, and academic success.

## 8. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study illuminates the pervasive phenomenon of hookup culture among female undergraduates at Tai Solarin University of Education. The findings indicate a high prevalence of hookup culture, with a significant proportion of female students engaging in this behavior. The research identifies various factors contributing to the prevalence of hookups, including financial difficulties, personal gratification, peer pressure, coercion, and the



influence of societal trends. Moreover, the study highlights the detrimental effects of hookups on both academic performance and social development among female undergraduates. Engagement in hookups is associated with absenteeism, decreased focus on studies, poor academic achievement, and strained relationships. Additionally, hookups lead to stigmatization, secrecy, peer normalization, and feelings of loneliness, ultimately impacting the social development and mental health of female students. These findings underscore the need for interventions and support systems to address the hookup culture and promote healthy relationships and academic success among female undergraduates.

## 9. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed;

1. Educational Institutions should take the lead in implementing various measures. They should introduce comprehensive sex education programmes to provide students with essential information on safe sex, consent, and the consequences of commercializing sex.
2. Government bodies should collaborate with educational institutions to provide financial assistance or/and part-time job opportunities to the students facing financial difficulties. This initiatives will help to address those factors responsible for hookup culture among undergraduates.
3. Collaborating with educational institutions, government and Non-Governmental Organisations can provide resources, support, and alternative opportunities for female students involved in hookups. These organizations can also offer empowerment programmes, such as entrepreneurship training and vocational skills development, to equip female students with the skills and knowledge they need to become financially self-reliant.
4. Parents and guardians of students should play active roles in the lives of students by providing emotional, financial, and moral support for them. They can help students make informed decisions and reduce their vulnerability to hookup culture.
5. Regular workshop on academics should be organized to the students. This will serve as encouragement and enhance their commitment to their studies and other academic activities.

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