

**INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON HOOKUP AMONG
STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN**

BY

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FACULTY OF ARTS,
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BENIN CITY, NIGERIA**

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A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION
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PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF
BACHELOR OF ARTS (B.A) DEGREE IN MASS COMMUNICATION.

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DECLARATION

I, Obrikogho Eloho, hereby declare that this project titled “Influence of Social Media on Hookup Culture among Students of the University of Benin” is my original work, carried out under the supervision of Mr. Sunday.A. Ekerikevwe (FRHD). To the best of my knowledge, this work has not been submitted in part or in full for the award of any degree or diploma in this or any other institution. All sources used have been duly acknowledged.

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project titled “ Influence of Social Media on Hookup Culture among Students of the University of Benin” was carried out by Obrikogho Eloho with Matriculation Number ART2100986, in the Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State. The work meets the requirements for the award of a Bachelor of Arts degree in Mass Communication.

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Date

DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to GOD Almighty for His daily benefits, and never ending merciful blessings upon my life.

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Abstract

This study investigated the influence of social media on hookup culture among students of the University of Benin, focusing on how social media platforms promote hookups, the platforms commonly used, reasons for engagement, peer and societal influences, and consequences. A descriptive survey design was employed, with 397 students sampled across faculties using stratified and random sampling techniques. Data were collected via a structured questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale and analyzed using frequency distributions. Findings revealed that social media promotes hookup culture primarily through anonymity and direct messaging features, with Tinder and WhatsApp identified as the most used platforms. Financial incentives and loneliness were the primary motivators for hookups, driven by Nigeria's economic challenges, while curiosity played a significant role among younger students. Economic hardship and societal pressures, including media portrayals and peer influence, strongly shaped hookup behaviors. However, the consequences were predominantly negative, with mental health challenges, academic declines, and social stigma being the most significant, outweighing perceived benefits like confidence or financial gain. The study was grounded in Cultivation Theory, Theory of Planned Behavior, Uses and Gratifications Theory, Technological Determinism, and Diffusion of Innovation, which explained the normalization of hookups, motivations, and societal influences. The study concludes that social media significantly drives hookup culture, necessitating interventions to address its adverse effects on UNIBEN students' well-being.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

It is no longer news that social media has become a powerful tool in shaping societal behaviours, norms, and values, especially among young people. This is because when attention is channeled in a direction, people tends to believe what they see or hear from where they have channeled their attention to. Social media are Internet social networking sites that connect people together for different purposes specifically on what they like, whom they prefer to interact with, or the community they want to belong to.

Platforms such as LinkedIn, Threads, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Tik Tok, and Twitter (X) have not only revolutionized communication but have also influenced lifestyle choices, including relationships and social interactions. It is an undisputed fact that these social media are changing virtually everything now more than ever anyone has imagined. Before this period, making friends and starting a relationship were purely through the traditional means of face-to-face social interaction in specific places such as school, religious gathering centers, market places, parties and clubs. But now, people can interact and make friends with distant individuals without physical contact or a fore knowledge of whom they are interacting with. This is done with the simple act of sending a friend request or having a connection with the person via any of the social media handles. According to Kaplan and Haelin (2010), social media supports social networks by connecting a user's profile with the profile of either an individual or a group.

However, unlike the conventional media, there are no control, no code of ethics and no gatekeeping that will serve as a guide to what transpires in it. Ekeanyanwu and Kalyango

(2013, p. 150) describe them “as the ninth wonder of the world because such media platforms are becoming increasingly connected, interactive, participatory, integrative, community based, ubiquitous, and digital.” According to Gruber and Grube (2000), messages and images encouraging good sexual behaviour are frequently sent to young people without any warning about the dangers or adverse effects.

These shortcomings have created room for different kinds of vices such as falsification, incredibility, lack of professionalism, falsehood, sedition, blackmail, pornography, invasion of privacy, and other unacceptable media practices. They have also been used to promote prostitution popularly referred to as “hookup”. "Hookup" refers to transactional sexual relationships where individuals, mostly young women, engage in intimate relationships in exchange for financial benefits, gifts, or favours. Unlike traditional dating, which emphasizes on emotional connection, hookup culture thrives on short-term, casual encounters often facilitated through the usage of social media platforms. With the rise of online anonymity, students now have easier access to social media groups, messaging apps, and dating platforms that promote or normalize “hookups”.

It is worthy to note that many students of tertiary institutions are seeing their admission into such institutions as opportunities to gain freedom from their parents. This is particularly common among the loosed ones. It is also including the strict and highly protective ones. The joy many of these students have when they receive the news of their admission is not only because they would be advancing their academic career or acquiring knowledge, but because they would leave their parents and guardians for some times. The independence students gain for living alone in school has given many of them freedom to do whatever they like and to go wherever they want, knowing fully well that they are no more under the direct supervision or directives of their parents or guardian. The consciousness of

being free from their parents and guardians make many students of the tertiary institution engage in vices within and outside their school premises and hostels.

Many undergraduates engage in drug abuse, cultism, cybercrime, examination malpractice, sexual harassment, prostitution, hooliganism and other academic malpractices. The proliferation of vices among students in tertiary institutions has become a pressing concern for stakeholders. The engagement of students in these vices has detrimental consequences for their well-being and, in some cases, affects others. A significant vice prevalent among undergraduate students, particularly females, is hookup. 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 remains ambiguous, with varying interpretations among scholars. Klinger (2016) broadens the definition to encompass a range of sexual behaviours, including kissing and penetrative intercourse. Fundamentally, hookup culture refers to sexual interactions between partners without a romantic relationship (Fielder & Carey, 2010). Hookup is a name or 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 dating, courting or into romantic relationships.

Hookup is not just particular to "single" students. Some married women who are students engage in hookup due to economic pressures, the pursuit of financial stability, and sometimes the need to feel among. Married female students leverage platforms like Instagram

and WhatsApp to engage in transactional relationships, often with older, and wealthier individuals who they feel is better than their spouses in ways particular to them. This behavior is facilitated by the anonymity and accessibility of social media, which allow these women to maintain dual identities: one as a committed spouse and another as a participant in casual or economically motivated sexual encounters. The constant display of this lifestyle on social media platforms like Facebook and Snapchat as a means to luxury, independence, and sexual freedom creates a "fear of missing out" (FOMO) effect, prompting some married women to explore casual relationships as a form of liberation or social experimentation. Thus, social media not only facilitates these encounters but also reshapes the moral and relational boundaries for married female students.

In the University of Benin (UNIBEN), like many other tertiary institutions in Nigeria, social media plays a significant role in connecting students to such opportunities. Through platforms like WhatsApp, Tiktok, Telegram, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, and other dating sites students can network, find potential "clients" or partners, and even join private groups dedicated to matchmaking. While some students see this as a means of survival due to financial hardship, others engage in it for luxury and peer influence. It is against this backdrop that the researcher seeks to examine the extent to which social media influences the promotion of hookup culture among students of the University of Benin. This study will explore the role of social media in facilitating peer pressure, and the role of social media in promoting the perception of quick financial gains as a mirror that is shaping students' attitudes towards hookups. Additionally, the study will analyze the implications of this trend on students' academic performance, mental health, and societal values.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The increasing dependency on social media for socialization has contributed to the normalization of hookup among university students. While traditional moral values that emphasize long-term relationships and emotional commitment are gradually fading away, the digital age has made transactional relationships more accessible and socially acceptable. The prevalence of hookup has raised concerns about its impact on students' self-esteem, academic performance, and future aspirations. Several studies have examined the role of social media in shaping youth behavior, but little research has been conducted on how these platforms actively promote hookup among Nigerian university students. This study seeks to study the extent social media promotes hookups.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The study will achieve the following objectives

1. Examine the role of social media platforms in the promotion of hookup among UNIBEN students.
2. Identify the most common social media platforms used for hookup networking.
3. Investigate the reasons why students engage in hookups through social media.
4. Assess the influence of peer groups, and societal pressures in encouraging hookup culture.
5. Analyze the consequences of hookup on students' academic performance, self-esteem, and mental well-being.

1.4 Research Questions

The study will be guided by the following research questions:

1. How does social media contribute to the promotion of hookup among University of Benin students?
2. What are the most frequently used social media platforms for hookups among students?
3. What are the factors that motivate students to engage in hookups through social media?
4. How do social media and societal expectations influence hookup culture?
5. What are the academic, psychological, and social consequences of hookup culture on students?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is important for several reasons:

It will provide insights into how social media influences students' relationships and decision-making, which will help them to make informed choices, selection of what content to consume on social media and its general usage. The findings will help parents understand the digital influences shaping their children's behaviors and provide guidance on social media usage. It will also help children to make informed choices on the general usage of social media. The government can use the study to increase investment in youth empowerment programs, scholarships, and skill acquisition initiatives to reduce student's reliance on transactional relationships for financial survival. This study will help University administrators to highlight the impact of hookup culture on students' academic performance

and well-being, which could lead to the development of policies addressing digital influence and student welfare. Also, his study will contribute to discussions of media and policymakers on digital literacy and the regulation of social media content that promotes hookup culture.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on students of the University of Benin, Nigeria. It will specifically examine their use of social media platforms and how these platforms influence their engagement in hookup. The study will target students from different faculties and levels to gain a broad understanding of the trend.

1.7 Operational definition of terms

The following concepts were used contextually in this study; for clarity, the terms will be defined within the context of the study.

Social Media: Online platforms that allow users to create, share, and engage with content, such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter (X), WhatsApp, Telegram and other dating sites.

Hookup: Hookup refers to transactional sexual relationships where individuals, mostly young women, engage in intimate relationships in exchange for financial benefits, gifts, or favors

Students: These are university of Benin undergraduates between 100 through 500 levels

Influence: Influence refers to the power or ability to affect or change someone's thoughts, feelings, behaviour, or decisions

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Concept of Social Media

Social media refers to digital platforms that facilitate the creation, sharing, and exchange of user-generated content within virtual communities (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The concept of social media influence on promoting hookup among university students revolves around the interaction between digital platforms and casual sexual behavior. Social media, as defined by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), refers to internet-based platforms that allows users to create, share, and exchange messages or content within these communities, such as Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook, Snapchat and Twitter (X). These platforms facilitate rapid communication with ease from the comfort of the user's location.

Boyd & Ellison (2008) defines Social Media as websites which allow profile creation and visibility of relationships between users Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, & Silvestre, B.S. (2011) sees social media as web-based applications which provide functionality for sharing, relationships, group, conversation and profiles. Diga & Kelleher (2009) refers to Social media as “social media sites” on the other hand, Kapoor, Tamilmani, Rana, & Nerur; Oestreicher-Singer & Zalmanson, (2013) opines that Social Media is a set of information technologies which facilitate interactions and networking. However, there appears to be a broad agreement that Web2.0 technologies played a significant role in the development and adoption of social media. Another definition of social media by Huang & Benyoucef (2013, p. 246). refers to “Internet-based applications built on Web 2.0, while Web 2.0 refers to a concept as well as a platform for harnessing collective intelligence”. Social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, provide people with a pervasive network connectivity (Asur & Huberman, 2010).

Social media are powerful tools that shape how students communicate, connect, and behave. Scholars offer varied definitions that highlight their role in this study. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, p. 61) define social media as “interactive computer-mediated technologies that facilitate the creation or sharing of information, ideas, career interests, and other forms of expression via virtual communities and networks.” This shows social media as spaces where students share posts, videos, or messages that can influence others. For example, an Instagram story showing a glamorous lifestyle tied to hookups might catch students’ attention, encouraging them to copy what they see, as social learning theory suggests people learn by observing. Boyd and Ellison (2007, p. 211) describe social media as “web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view their connections.” This definition emphasizes profiles and networks, like WhatsApp groups where students meet potential hookup partners.

In Nigeria, where community matters, such connections amplify peer influence, making hookups seem normal when friends post about them. Kietzmann et al. (2011, p. 241) focus on content, defining social media as “platforms that enable users to create, share, and exchange content within online communities”. Mangold and Faulds (2009, p. 358) call social media “online environments where users contribute, retrieve, and explore content primarily through digital word-of-mouth.” This word-of-mouth happens when students chat about hookups in Telegram groups, shaping attitudes as peers praise or glamorize it. Correa, Hinsley, Zuniga (2010, p. 247) view social media as “digital tools that support socialization, communication, and information dissemination,” pointing to how platforms help students learn hookup norms by watching influencers or classmates. Aichner and Jacob (2015, p. 259) broaden this to “internet-based applications that promote social interaction and community building”, reflecting how Facebook creates communities where University students see hookups as a way to fit in or gain status. Carr and Hayes (2015, p. 50) define social media as

“technologies that enable users to connect, communicate, and share experiences in real-time virtual spaces”. This real-time aspect means students can instantly message someone for a hookup, making it easy and fast, and serving as a key factor in its promotion. Ellison, Vitak, Gray & Lampe (2014, p.18) emphasize engagement, calling social media “platforms that facilitate user engagement, relationship formation, and content distribution”. This engagement, like likes on a TikTok video about hookups, reinforces behaviors, aligning with Social learning theory’s idea of rewards. Tuten and Solomon (2017, p. 15) highlight collaboration, defining social media as “web and mobile-based tools that allow individuals to interact, collaborate, and build relationships through shared digital content”. Students collaborate by joining group chats, learning from shared experiences. Finally, McIntyre (2019, p.7) integrates these ideas, describing social media as “systems that support user-generated content, social networking, and interactive communication”, capturing how platforms enable students to observe, copy, and spread hookup culture.

From the above definitions, it can be deduced that Social media are technological networking sites that gives room for users to connect, share content and build relationships globally; breaking distance barrier and fostering communication. Social Media is like a big online community where people share their thoughts, ideas, and experiences with others. It is a platform where one can connect with people on a global scale, share contents, join conversations and follow interests to stay updated on news, trends or hobbies.

2.1.2 Concept of Hookup

"Hookup" is broadly defined as a casual sexual encounter without the expectation of a committed relationship nor any romantic or emotional connection and attachment. These

encounters range from kissing, romancing to sexual intercourse and are characterized by their quick connection with lack of emotional attachment. In Western contexts, hookup culture has been widely studied among college students, often linked to social settings like parties or dating apps (Wade, 2017). Hookup culture is a growing trend among students, and scholars define it to clarify its nature. Garcia, Reiber, Massey, Merriwether (2012; p. 161) describe a hookup as “a sexual encounter between two people who are not romantic partners, often with no expectation of commitment”. This fits students who meet via social media for casual sex without wanting a relationship, driven by what they see online. Social learning theory explains this as imitating peers who model hookups as fun or normal. Fielder and Carey (2010; p. 347) expand this by defining hookups as “brief, uncommitted sexual encounters ranging from kissing to intercourse”. This range is relevant in Nigeria, where hookups might start with flirting online before escalating, into physical meetings. Bogle (2008) emphasizes casualness, calling hookups “sexual activity between individuals without plans for a relationship.” At the University level, students may hook up after chatting on WhatsApp, seeing it as a one-time act, influenced by peers’ posts. Holman and Sillars (2012; p. 532) include variety, defining hookups as “non-relational sexual interactions from kissing to intercourse.” This variety matters as students observe different hookup behaviors online, choosing what to copy based on rewards like attention or money. Wade (2017; p.16) highlights pleasure, describing a hookup as “an encounter focused on physical pleasure without romantic involvement.”

This focus on pleasure drives some students to hook up for fun, reinforced by likes or comments on Instagram, as social learning theory predicts. Paul, McManus & Hayes (2000; p. 76) note spontaneity, defining hookups as “sexual interactions between acquaintances or strangers”. Social media’s anonymity allows such quick meetings, like a Snapchat connection leading to a hookup. Owen, Rhoades, Stanley & Fincham (2011; p. 654) stress intent, calling

hookups “sexual acts without intending to pursue a relationship”. This intent is clear when students use Telegram to find partners for financial benefits, learning from others’ success stories. Stinson (2010; p.139) ties hookups to culture, defining them as “uncommitted behaviors absent traditional courtship”. In Nigeria, where courtship was once valued, social media shifts norms, showing hookups as modern, which students imitate. Kuperberg and Padgett (2016; p. 1073) focus on physicality, calling hookups “casual liaisons prioritizing intimacy over connection”. This physical focus appeals to students seeking quick rewards, learned from online models. Allison and Risman (2017; p. 119) clarify expectations, defining hookups as “short-term engagements with no relational obligations”, fitting students who hook up for money without emotional ties.

It can also be said that Hookup is usually a one-time sexual encounter, which may re-occur between individuals involved, depending on their transaction, but without any form of emotional attachment. It typically refers to a physical romantic encounter between two people, usually without the expectation of a long-term relationship or commitment. It can involve a range of activities, from kissing to intimacy, which is often characterised by a lack of emotional attachment or future plans.

2.1.3 Intersection of Social Media and Hookup

Rather than strengthening developmental efforts and social values, social media tends to be a threat to society, values, norms and cultural beliefs, this is because it poses many challenges to society that the society might not be able to solve. However, they seem to have gained much popularity among different categories of people in the society including University students. Some literature also suggests that these students use social media for varying purposes (Rutherford, 2010; Brenner, 2013; Bridgestock, 2013; ScienceDaily, 2013). Social media promotes hookup by providing platforms for anonymity, connectivity, and the free

flow of explicit content which includes direct messaging, "sharing stories," and location-based tagging that enables students to initiate and sustain casual relationships with little or no effort.

The intersection of social media and hookup culture is central to understanding how digital platforms promote casual sexual encounters among University of students. Social media are defined as “web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile, articulate connections, and share content within networks” (Boyd & Ellison, 2007, p. 211). These platforms create spaces where hookups, described as “brief, uncommitted sexual encounters ranging from kissing to intercourse” (Fielder & Carey, 2010, p. 347), flourish. Social Learning Theory, which states people learn behaviors by observing others and imitating rewarded actions, frames this analysis, showing how students adopt hookup behaviors from online examples. Social media intersects with hookup in the following ways:

Anonymity and Accessibility: Social media enable hookups by offering anonymity and easy access to partners. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010; p. 16) define social media as “interactive technologies that facilitate the creation and sharing of information through virtual communities”. This interactivity allows University students to use fake profiles on platforms like Instagram or Snapchat, by hiding their identities while arranging hookups. For instance, a student might message someone on WhatsApp without revealing their real name, thereby avoiding the stigma tied to casual sex in Nigeria’s conservative society. Tuten and Solomon (2017; p. 15) describe social media as “tools that support collaboration and relationship-building through digital content”, highlighting how private chats enable discreet connections. Students use anonymity to hook up safely, imitate the behavior, and feel rewarded when it works without consequences (Bandura, 1977).

Accessibility further drives hookups by making connections instant. Carr and Hayes (2015; p. 50) call social media “technologies that connect users in real-time virtual spaces”, meaning students can find partners anytime. All students might browse Telegram late at night, see a hookup offer, and respond immediately, unlike slower offline methods like meeting at social events. Sales (2015; p. 32) notes that apps like Tinder “streamline casual encounters by connecting users instantly”, a pattern mirrored in Nigeria with platforms like Facebook groups. Social Learning Theory suggests students observe these quick successes peers arranging hookups in minutes—and copy them, expecting similar ease (Bandura, 1977). In Nigeria’s economic hardship, where students need fast solutions like money for fees, social media’s accessibility makes hookups appealing, as platforms link them to generous partners (Uzobo et al., n.d.).

Peer Influence and Modeling: Social media amplify peer influence, encouraging students to adopt hookup behaviors. Kietzmann et al. (2011; p.241) define social media as “platforms where users create and share content within communities”, exposing students to peers’ lifestyles. At the University of Benin, a student might see a friend’s TikTok video hinting at a hookup, sparking curiosity to try it. Bogle (2008; p. 5) defines hookups as “sexual activities between individuals without plans for a relationship”, often driven by what peers do. Social Learning Theory posits that people learn by observing models and imitating rewarded behaviors (Bandura, 1977). When students see classmates gain attention for hookup-related posts, they mimic them, seeking similar popularity.

Nigeria’s group-oriented culture heightens this influence. Mangold and Faulds (2009; p. 358) view social media as “environments for digital word-of-mouth”, like Instagram comments praising a student’s glamorous hookup story. Owan et al. (2020; p. 160) found that “social media exposure increases sexual behaviors among Nigerian undergraduates”, as students copy what peers share. For example, a male student might post about a hookup to

seem “cool,” and others follow, learning it boosts status. Social Learning Theory explains this cycle: observation (seeing the post), imitation (trying a hookup), and reinforcement (getting likes or respect) make hookups common on campus (Bandura, 1977). Unlike traditional settings, where influence was limited to close friends, social media broadcast behaviors to thousands, accelerating their spread among students.

Normalization of Transactional Relationships: Social media normalize hookups as transactions, especially in Nigeria’s tough economy. McIntyre (2019; p.7) defines social media as “systems supporting user-generated content and interactive communication”, including posts advertising financial benefits. On Facebook, University of Benin students encounter groups promising “sugar mummy” deals, framing hookups as income sources. Wade (2017; p. 16) describes hookups as “encounters prioritizing physical pleasure without commitment”, but in Nigeria, pleasure often means money or gifts. Akintola (2021; p. 28) notes that “social media glamorize transactional sex among Nigerian youth”, as students see posts about new phones bought through hookups.

Social Learning Theory shows how this works: students observe peers flaunting rewards like clothes or money imitate by joining hookup chats, and feel rewarded when they gain similar benefits (Bandura, 1977). Paul et al. (2000; p.76) define hookups as “sexual interactions between acquaintances or strangers”, often transactional online. A female student might browse Snapchat, see a friend’s story about a paid hookup, and learn it’s a way to survive. Unlike Western hookups focused on fun (Owen et al., 2011), Nigerian students prioritize necessity, with social media acting as a marketplace. This normalization shifts perceptions, making hookups seem like regular jobs, as platforms flood students with success stories they observe and copy.

Reshaping Cultural Norms: Social media challenge Nigeria's traditional values, favoring hookups over relationships. Ellison, Vitak, Gray, & Lampe (2014) define social media as "platforms fostering engagement and content distribution", exposing students to global trends, Instagram videos of casual sex contrast with Nigeria's emphasis on marriage' Holman and Sillars (2012) define hookups as "non-relational interactions from kissing to intercourse" clashing with traditional courtship. Social Learning Theory suggests students observe these modern behaviors, imitate them, and feel rewarded by fitting into a new digital culture (Bandura, 1977). In this light, at the University of Benin, urban students with smartphones may see hookups as freedom. Adegoke (2020) states that "social media import Western sexual attitudes to Nigeria", like Snapchat posts normalizing casual flings. Female students, including married ones, may hook up to feel modern, observing influencers who model independence through hookups. Social Learning Theory explains this shift: students see rewards (status, acceptance), copy the behavior, and reshape norms (Bandura, 1977). Unlike rural areas with less internet, urban campuses face constant exposure, making hookups seem acceptable. This study explores how social media drive this change, impacting students' academics and mental health by prioritizing hookups over values like commitment.

2.2 Historical Review

2.2.1 History of Social Media

The history of social media is a story of technological and cultural transformation, evolving from simple online forums to dynamic platforms that shape behaviors like hookup culture among University of Benin students. The origins of social media can be traced to the 1970s, when the internet's early forms enabled basic communication. Platforms like Usenet, launched in 1979, allowed users to post messages in discussion groups, creating what Rheingold (1993; p.15) describes as "electronic communities for sharing knowledge". These

systems relied on slow modems and were used by tech enthusiasts, but they introduced the idea of connecting strangers digitally, a concept now central to how students use social media to find hookup partners. By the 1980s, services like America Online offered chat rooms, letting people exchange ideas across distances. These early tools, though limited by costly access, set the stage for social media's role in fostering interactions that influence youth behaviours.

The 1990s brought significant advances as the internet became more accessible. The launch of TheGlobe.com in 1995 allowed users to create personal pages and join communities, a step toward user-driven content, which Kaplan and Haenlein (2010; p. 62) call "the foundation of modern social media". Instant messaging services like ICQ, introduced in 1996, enabled real-time chats, hinting at the speed of today's platforms. In 1997, SixDegrees.com emerged as the first recognizable social networking site, letting users create profiles and connect with friends. Boyd and Ellison (2007; p. 217) highlight its innovation in "mapping social connections online", though it closed by 2001 due to low internet penetration. For Nigerian students, who had limited internet access in the 1990s, these developments were distant, but they laid groundwork for platforms that would later influence their behaviors, like arranging hookups via digital networks.

The early 2000s saw social media gain mainstream traction. LiveJournal, started in 1999, let users post blogs, fostering personal expression that Mangold and Faulds (2009) liken to "digital storytelling". Friendster, launched in 2002, connected users through friend lists, growing rapidly before technical issues slowed it down. MySpace, debuting in 2003, became a global hit, especially among youth, by offering customizable profiles for sharing music and photos. Its popularity, noted by Tuten and Solomon (2017; p. 16) as "a youth culture driver", showed how social media could shape trends, a precursor to how Nigerian students now use platforms to showcase hookup lifestyles. In 2004, Facebook launched for

college students, expanding worldwide by 2006. Ellison et al. (2014; p.18) describe it as a “tool for maintaining social ties”, with features like walls and albums that engaged early Nigerian users as internet cafes spread in cities like Benin.

The mid-2000s diversified social media’s forms. LinkedIn, launched in 2003, focused on professional networking, while YouTube, starting in 2005, made video-sharing accessible. Carr and Hayes (2015; p. 51) note YouTube’s role in “democratizing content creation”, influencing how students later used visuals to promote behaviors. Twitter, introduced in 2006, allowed 140-character posts, enabling rapid communication. Kietzmann et al. (2011; p.242) call Twitter a “platform for instant global dialogue”, a feature Nigerian student used to follow trends by the late 2000s. In Nigeria, internet access was still limited, but cybercafes and early mobile data let urban students join these platforms, setting the stage for social media’s impact on hookup culture, as they observed and imitated global behaviors.

The 2010s marked a mobile revolution, transforming social media’s reach. Smartphones and cheaper data, especially in Nigeria, made platforms constant companions. Instagram, launched in 2010, prioritized images and stories, becoming a favorite for students to share glamorous posts, some hinting at hookups. McIntyre (2019; p. 8) highlights Instagram’s “visual communication focus”, which amplifies peer influence. WhatsApp, growing after its 2009 debut, became Nigeria’s go-to for group chats, with Ufuophu-Biri (2014) noting its use in “facilitating student interactions, including risky ones”. Snapchat, launched in 2011, offered temporary posts, appealing to students seeking private flirtations. Sumter, Vandenbosch, & Lintenberg (2017) argue that such platforms “reduce barriers to casual interactions”, a trend seen in Nigeria as students used Snapchat to arrange discreet hookups.

In Nigeria, social media's growth was dramatic in the 2010s. Local platforms like Eskimi briefly competed, but global apps dominated as data costs fell. Owan et al. (2020) report that "by 2015, most Nigerian undergraduates used social media daily" (p. 159), driven by affordable phones. Facebook groups and WhatsApp chats became spaces for students to connect, sometimes for transactional hookups, as economic pressures pushed some to seek financial support (Ebagua, 2024). Twitter's anonymity allowed open hookup discussions, amplifying their visibility on campuses like the University of Benin.

The late 2010s and early 2020s introduced new platforms and trends. TikTok, launched globally in 2017, popularized short videos, with students creating content that sometimes-glamorized hookup culture. Ngonso (2019) notes that "social media's visual nature influences Nigerian youth behaviors" (p. 11). Telegram, growing in Nigeria, offered private groups, some for hookup arrangements, reflecting economic motives. By 2023, Statista reported over 40 million social media users in Nigeria, with university students among the most active, using platforms to observe and mimic behaviors, as Social Learning Theory suggests (Bandura, 1977). This evolution from Usenet's forums to TikTok's videos shows how social media grew into tools that shape student actions, enabling this study to explore their role in promoting hookups through learned behaviours.

2.2.2 History of Hookup

In the 1700s, marriages and courtships were seen as a business deal. More often than not, parents were in charge of finding partners for their children. It wasn't until the 1800s that young adults had the choice of whom to marry. Although newspaper advisements seeking love were popular in Europe, it wasn't until 1870 that the first newspaper for singles was created in America. The Matrimonial News was first published in San Francisco.

In 1920, Hookups became more frequent with the rise of automobiles and novel entertainment, such as movie theaters and dancing. During this time period, young adults had more freedom to engage in casual sex. Between 1929 and 1945, The Great Depression and World War II put a pause to hook-up culture as young women started the "going steady", monogamous, long-term dating phase. In 1959, the first matchmaking service was created by James Harvey and Philip A. Fialer at Stanford University. 49 men and 49 women were asked to fill out a questionnaire and were later matched.

The 1960s marked the Sexual Revolution. The first birth control pill available for purchase hit the market on June 23, 1960. This sparked a rise in feminism now that women had control over their futures. In 1965, the first computer dating service, "Operation Match", was created. In 1969, "Blue Movie" was the first adult erotic film to receive wide release. With the changing of society's norms, sex became more socially acceptable. In 1990, people had access to the internet, and online dating websites became increasingly popular. By 1998, email and instant messaging became more common among Americans.

In 2007, the creation of smartphones enabled daters to communicate on the go. On September 1, Tinder was founded. Since then, many other dating apps have been created and have helped make hooking up easier. A broader perspective of the history will be discussed below.

The roots of the hookup culture go back to the 1920s where societal norms started to change, mobility increased, and medicine and science had advanced developments. For example, with the advent use of cars, people's mobility increased, which led to a decrease in the time spent with parental supervision, which led young men and women to have more freedom (Stinson 2010).

The 1920s was just the beginning of many changes, and the number of women who wanted to follow the role of wife and mother reduced after the advances in the contraceptive technology in 1960 (Heer and Grossbard-Shechtman 1981). Again in the 1960s with the sexual revolution, young adults became more sexually liberated, making them more open to short-term mating practices (Garcia et al. 2012). This movement toward sexual liberalism continued with the rise of feminism and increased numbers of females in the workforce and university students. Long-term relationships were viewed as potentially interfering with career goals, so young adults started to substitute quick hookups for long-term relationships that usually require longer investments (Heldman and Wade 2010). As a result, the age of first marriage increased, creating time for young adults to be sexually active but not ready to settle down (Garcia et al. 2012).

Although it seems as if culture and sexual lifestyle has changed in the new millennia, data from the Generals Social Survey (GSS) indicates otherwise. Since 1972, the GSS has been conducted by the National Opinion Research Center to assess the experiences, attitudes, and practices of United States residents. GSS data indicate that there is only a modest difference between the waves from 1988 to 1996 and 2004 to 2012 in sexual behavior. Young adult (18–25) respondents from the 2004 to 2012 waves did not report more frequent sex or more sexual partners than young adults in the 1988–1996 waves. However, respondents from the 2004 to 2012 waves were less likely to report sex with a regular partner, and more likely to report sex with a casual dating partner or friend (Monto and Carey 2014). This small change between the two groups suggests increase in the hookup culture and is consistent with changes in “sexual scripts.” Sexual script theory argues that sexual behaviors are initiated with a set of these “scripts” that people use to shape and understand sexual encounters (Simon and Gagnon 1986). Scripts are a representation of the conceptualization of social behavior, and they direct behaviors for what should be done and who should do it in a context.

So, if people are living in a hookup culture today, it appears to be similar to the culture of the previous generation just with a different name (Monto and Carey 2014).

The origins of these scripts are not defined thoroughly, but evidence indicates that popular media influences the design of these scripts; and media is also an important factor in the growth of this culture (Garcia et al. 2012). As time passes, people are exposed to more mass media than ever before, and TV programs use sexual images, themes, and references more than in previous generations (Aubrey 2004). In the same vein, a content analysis shows that more than 90% of the songs in Billboard's Top Ten lists include sexual messages in their lyrics (Hobbs and Gallup 2011). A similar trend in the use of sexual themes can also be seen in print media in the depiction of smartphone apps designed for matchmaking. Currently, matchmaking applications are one of the most used mediums for people to meet new potential mates, "Tinder" being the app with the most users. Although studies show that people's motivation to use this application is more for "love" than "casual sex," the application is presented as the "hookup app" (Sevi et al. 2017). This increase in sexual exposure has been argued to be a possible reason for the endorsement and participation in the hookup culture, just as the relation between aggression and media violence (Heldman and Wade 2010).

2.3 Opinion Review

Uzobo, Michael-Olomu and Enoch, in their study titled; Social media use and sexual behavior of undergraduate students in a Nigeria (2020) found out that time spent on social media, age at first social media use, use of WhatsApp, use of Instagram, use of twitter, are significantly related to sexual behaviour of undergraduate students. The study of Broom and Allen (2017) on social media and sexual behaviour among adolescents in the United States,

similarly found out that the use of Facebook, Instagram had significant influence on the number of sexual partners. Also, Amoo, Adetoro and Olawale-Isaac (2014) studied on the effects of adolescents exposed to sexual content on social media in Nigeria. They found out that Facebook had a significant effect on the number of sexual partners. Oladeji and Ayanunma on media influence as predictors of adolescents' sexual risky behaviour in Nigeria showed that there was a significant relationship between media contents and sexual intercourse.

The study of Asrese and Mekonnen (2018) found that social network has a significant relationship with having sex. Nwagwu (2017) study on social networking identity and sexual behaviour of undergraduate's students in Nigerian Universities found that social personal identity and social networking itself predicted sexual behaviour. The implication of these findings is that as the social media platforms continue to evolve and new social media technologies invented, there is the possibility of the sexual behaviour of young people to also evolve. Thus, future planning of sexual and reproductive health needs to recognise the importance of social media in shaping the sexual health of young people.

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).

Harun's (2011) found out 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. Fielder and Carey's (2009) asserts 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.

Ufuophu-Biri (2014) in his study Social media as correlate of prostitution among students of higher institutions of learning in students in Delta University, Nigeria; also found out that students of institutions of higher learning have adopted the use of social media and they use them frequently. Apart from the frequency of use, the students also use social media for both good and bad purposes such as flirting/prostitution; exchanging Messages; gossiping; advertisement; finding social contacts; making money; searching online resources; making friends; sharing links; finding jobs online; spreading rumours; contributing to public discussions; academic purpose; news; and leisure/entertainment. It was also instructive to note that gender plays a significant role in the use of social media for prostitution among students of institutions of higher learning.

2.4 Empirical Review

In a study titled; Social media as correlate of prostitution among students of higher institutions of learning in students in Delta University, Nigeria by Ufuophu-Biri(2014); sought to determine the relationship between social media and prostitution among students of institutions of higher learning in Delta State. The objectives were to identify the primary purpose for which the students use the social media, to determine the frequency of social media use among the students of institutions in higher learning in Delta State, Nigeria, to access the relationship between students gender and the use of social media for prostitution in institutions of higher learning in Delta State, Nigeria. A population of approximately 150,000 students studying in various institutions of higher learning in Delta State were selected for the study. From the population, 3,438 students were selected as sample. A survey method was employed and questionnaire were used respectively as method and instrument of data collection. The study was anchored on the uses and gratification theory which posits that the media users seek out the media that best fulfil their individual needs. The findings indicated

that the students use social media significantly for prostitution. The study found out there was a significant relationship between the students use of social media and their involvement in prostitution.

The study also found out that there was a significant relationship between the students gender and their use of social media for prostitution. The study recommends that the authorities of the selected institutions, non-Governmental Organizations and the government should mount orientation programmes and formulate policies to discourage the students from using social media for negative purpose.

In another study titled; Impact of social media on the sexual behaviours of undergraduate students in the UK by Benotsch, Snipes, Martin & Bull (2013) investigated how social media has impacted sexual behaviours of undergraduates in the UK. The study was sampled using descriptive survey. The study was anchored on the Uses and gratification theory. According to the findings of the research, undergraduate in UK have a considerable amount of sexual conduct that may be attributed to the effect of social media. In particular, it was discovered that students use of social media was connected with an increase in the number of sexual activities they participated in, in addition to an increase in the number of times they used contraception. The research also found that increasing understanding of sexual health and an increased sense of the dangers associated with having sexual encounters without protection are both connected with increased use of social media. The findings of the research indicated that undergraduate students in the UK have a considerable amount of sexual conduct that is affected by social media. As a result, it was advised that more study be carried out in order to investigate the connection between social media platforms and the sexual behaviour of undergraduate students in Nigeria.

A penitent study “Sex and sexuality discourse among University students on social media in the University of Benin by Jimah (2023) adopted the survey design method, with the use of questionnaire as an instrument which was administered to 296 users of social networking sites in the department of Mass Communication. 264 of the questionnaires were retrieved and analysed using tables, frequencies and percentages. The study was anchored on the uses and gratification theory which suggests that media users select the medium to use for their satisfaction. Findings revealed that students were active users of social networking sites. Her findings also revealed that social media contains explicit sexual content displaying images/videos of sexualized content. The findings further revealed that some of the students were actively generating and sharing sexual materials and contents. The study therefore recommends that students should be educated on the proper use of the media. It also recommends that advocacy should be intensified to address the engagement in risky sexual behaviours by students in tertiary institutions.

Stephen, Ojo& Olayinka (2016) did a study to find out what factors affect how students at Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State, act sexually before they get married. Both men and women who were students at Niger Delta University took part in the poll. For this study, the survey research method was used to collect the data. 230 respondents were sent structured surveys, and 216 of them were returned. For the study, simple percentages and tables were used, and the chi-square method was used to test the theories. Findings show that a lot of college students have sex before they get married. The effects of having sex before getting married, such as unplanned pregnancies, bad grades, regret, health problems, sadness, and so on, were looked at. The study gave ideas for how to solve this problem based on what it found. The Niger Delta University study looked at a lot of different things about college students.

Inobemhe (2023) did a research titled; Influence of social media on the sexual behaviour of undergraduates in the University of Benin. The objective of the study was to find out the influence of social media on the sexual behaviour of undergraduates in the University of Benin (UNIBEN). Social learning theory (SLT), was used as the framework for this study. Survey design was employed with a 10 item questionnaire of a population of 385 UNIBEN Undergraduate students. 378 or 98.2% of them actively participated in the study. Data generated from this study were analyzed with the aid of frequency tables and simple percentages. The study found that social media influences sexual behavior negatively by perpetuating harmful and unrealistic sexual stereotypes, it was also revealed that social media exerts high sexual expectations leading to pressure and conformity to certain sexual norms, etc. Hence, it was recommended among other things that the University of Benin should develop and implement comprehensive sexual education programmes aimed at promoting safe and responsible use of social media exploration by its undergraduates. The study concluded that social media may be harmful but are still useful in influencing sexual behavior of the undergraduates.

Another study titled “Uniben Mass Communication student's perception of social media portrayal of sex workers in Edo State, Nigeria” by Abu (2023) explores how Edo State's sex workers were portrayed on social media by UNIBEN mass communication students. The study used a survey approach and was based on the tenets of technological determinism and uses and gratifications theories. The study involved 416 UNIBEN students studying mass communication. To ensure that every student had an equal chance of participating in the study, participants were chosen using proportionate and purposeful sampling approaches. Frequency tables and straightforward percentages were used to examine and show the data that were collected. According to the research, social media boosts the demand for sex in Edo state as well as the industry of sex workers.

Additionally, it was discovered that demographic parameters including religion, gender, age, and others influenced how mass communication students felt about how sex workers were portrayed on social media. According to the study's findings, social media will allow for the need to analyse how the portrayal of sex workers would affect users of the various platforms as society grows more knowledgeable about the true nature of sex workers. To monitor how these students use the school's Wi-Fi and what they post on social media, the report advised the management to establish a monitoring body. The study suggested that Social media platforms should be regulated so that sex-related content is limited or filtered, if not entirely forbidden, on them. Also, Universities should invest time in planning seminars, lectures, and symposiums to inform students, particularly UNIBEN students, about the risks associated with sex work and how their continued participation in sexual activity on social media may impair both their academic performance and sexual lifestyle.

The purpose of the research of Balogun, Obimuyiwa&Abdulaziz (2019) was to examine the prevalence and the determinants of sexting behaviour among undergraduates in Kwara State. The social cognitive theory was used as theoretical framework. The survey study approach was the research design and the questionnaire was designed to be filled out by the participants themselves as research instrument. The information gathered from a representative sample of 200 kwara State University students. According to the findings of the research, undergraduates in Nigeria have a considerable amount of sexual conduct that may be attributed to the effect of social media. In particular, it was discovered that students use of social media was connected with an increase in the number of sexual activities they participated in, as well as an increase in the number of times they used contraception. It was also shown that increasing awareness of sexual health was connected with the increased use of social media, in addition to an increased sense of the hazards associated with unprotected sexual activity. The findings of the research indicated, in conclusion that undergraduate

students in Nigeria have a considerable amount of sexual conduct that is affected by social media. It is proposed as a result that efforts should be made to utilise social media in order to improve sexual health among students in the country of Nigeria.

Galupo, Davis, Gryniewicz, & Mitchell (2014) carried out a study on the conceptualisation of sexual orientation identity among sexual minorities: patterns across sexual and gender identity to examine the impact that social media has on the sexual conduct of young people. Technological determinism theory was the theoretical framework and interview was the research design while interview guide was the research instrument. Twenty young people between the ages of 18 and 25 participated in in-depth interviews as part of a qualitative research strategy that was taken. The interviews focused on how their sexual conduct and their attitudes regarding sexual activity are influenced by social media, specifically how social media impacts their sexual behaviour. The findings indicated that participation in social media had a significant impact not only on the sexual behaviour of young people but also on their perspectives on such behaviors. According to the results, social media platforms have the potential to be an influential factor in the sexual behaviour of young people. As a result, more study in the field need to be encouraged. It is crucial to understand the intricacies of this connection in order to better avoid dangerous sexual activity among young people. The conclusion was that social media may have a substantial impact on the sexual behaviour of youth, and this findings suggests that this influence can be considerable. The provision of additional education on the responsible use of social media and the improvement of sexuality education so that it takes into account features of social media was also among the recommendations.

2.5 Theoretical Review

This study is anchored on these theories: Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), Technological determinism theory, Diffusion of innovation theory and Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB),

2.5.1 Uses and Gratifications Theory

The uses and gratification theory also called utility theory was proposed by Katz, Blumer, and Gurevitch (1974) suggests that individuals actively use media to satisfy specific needs. The theory seeks to explain what function a particular kind of media content serves in a particular circumstance. The theory seeks to investigate what people do with a communication content instead of what the communication content does to them. The tenets of the theory Folarin (1998) notes that the theory perceives the recipient as actively influencing the effect process since they selectively choose, attend to, perceive and retain the media messages on the basis of their needs, beliefs, etc. the focus according to Folarin was shifted from media production and transmission functions to the media consumption function. This explains why people have a decision on what media to use and what to use it with Uses and gratifications theory emphasises motives and self perceived needs of audience members. Basic needs, social situations, and the need individual's background, such as experiences, interests and education, affect people's ideas about what they want from media and which media best meets their needs. That is to say that the audience members are aware of and can state their own motives and gratifications for using different media.

Wimmer and Dominick (2000) points out that uses and gratification theory takes the view of a media consumer. It examines how people use the media and the gratification they seek and derive from their media behaviour. Uses and gratification researchers assume that audience are aware of and can articulate their reasons for using various mediums

Unlike theories assuming media control users, Uses and Gratifications Theory highlights user agency, examining what people do with media and why they find it rewarding. In this study, Uses and Gratifications Theory relates to why students use platforms like Instagram or WhatsApp for hookups. Wimmer and Dominick (2000; p.23) note that “individuals seek gratifications like socializing or self-expression from media”, which applies to students seeking fun, attention, or financial support through hookups. The theory also explains varied motivations. Some students use social media for entertainment, enjoying flirty chats on Telegram, while others seek information, like finding hookup opportunities in Facebook groups, as Sundar and Limperos (2013; p. 507) argue that “users select platforms based on specific gratifications”. In Nigeria’s vast culture, social integration is key, so students use Instagram to feel part of trendy hookup culture, observing peers’ posts and seeking acceptance. Uses and Gratifications Theory thus shows how students’ choices to use social media for hookups are driven by personal and social needs, directly linking to the study’s aim to identify motivations like fun, money, or belonging, and how platforms meet these desires.

2.5.2 Technological Determinism Theory

The theory was formulated by Marshal McLuhan in 1964. Its tenets includes: (1) technology drives societal change, directing societal development (2) the medium shapes the message, prioritising medium characteristics; (3) cultural transformation, disrupting traditional norms; (4) autonomous influence, with technology acting independently; and (5) adaptation to technology, requiring societal adjustments. The theory holds that the media not only alter their environment but the very message they convey. The media bring new perceptual habits with their technologies to create new environments. The theory states that the media, especially the media, decisively shape how individuals think, feel and act and how societies

organise themselves and operate. The medium determines the content of communication. The medium has the power to change our perceptions of the world. Mass communication has become the dominant form of interaction. Some examples of media that are crafted to conform to the medium are: films and television action-violence, windows interface and multi-tasking, and the textbook, tool and audio recording. Marshall McLuhan said that "inventions in technology invariably cause cultural change." As opposed to Karl Marx's theory of economic determinism where production makes changes in history, McLuhan's theory of technological determinism says that changes in modes of communication evolved human experience. McLuhan states that people adapt to their environments through a certain branch or ratio of their senses and the primary medium of the age brings out a particular sense ratio.

McLuhan sees every medium as the extension of human faculty, with the media of communication, exaggerating the particular sense. whatever predominates the media will influence human beings by affecting the way they perceive the world. Technological determinism is typically an example of a humanistic theory, but, it can be applied to a scientific theory. Technological determinism describes what happened in the past with the four periods of human history. McLuhan uses three different technological developments to show the transition into each new period. It draws order out of chaos and helps us to focus on what is important and ignores what is not. By focusing on the period, the technological development and the dominant sense receptors of the time, McLuhan simplifies the changes culture has made. It also explains why something happened. Why something happened is as important as what actually occurred. Each new period was pushed from one to the next because of each new technological development. Although, the inventors did not know it at the time, their invention made a major impact on human history. McLuhan discusses politics, education and sex and drugs as changing media, but, he did not talk about what they will do

in the future, only what they have already done. This theory does a good job of analysing what happened in the past and what is happening now, but, not what might be the future in communication. Simplicity is important for a scientific theory. It is easy to get caught up in a big, complicated theory, but, it is best to keep scientific theories simple. People are criticised when they offer a simple solution to a complex problem, but sometimes that leads straight to the truth. Technological determinism is a simple theory. It is very straightforward on the different periods of time and what began each period. McLuhan describes each period and its characteristics. Media being hot or cool is not very simple. McLuhan's theory can be tested because it is obvious to see looking back at history what changed one era to another. The only problem that can come from this is the fact that the theory is simply his opinion. McLuhan thinks that modes of communication changed society, but Karl Marx's theory of economic determinism says that modes of production are what make changes in humanity.

In this study, Technological Determinism Theory relates to how social media's features drive hookup culture. Platforms like WhatsApp, with disappearing messages, make students see hookups as low-risk and private, unlike public relationship. Instagram's visual focus. This feature encourages students to post glamorous photos to attract hookup partners. In Nigeria, where traditional values once dominated, social media's speed and anonymity has now taken the lead. Students now prioritize quick connections over long-term relationships, a change driven by the platforms themselves. For example, WhatsApp's group chats enable instant hookup planning, altering how students interact compared to slower, traditional methods. Technological Determinism Theory thus supports the study's aim to explore how platforms' designs promote hookups, showing how their technological features encourage casual sex and challenge Nigerian cultural norms.

2.5.3 Diffusion of Innovation Theory

The theory proposed by P. Lazarsfeld, B. Berelson and H. Gaudet in 1944, describes how new behaviours spread through a population. Its tenets are: (1) diffusion process spreads through communication; (2) adopters categories from innovators to laggards; (3) innovation characteristics, like relative advantage and compatibility; (4) social system influence, shaping adoption; and (5) communication channels, driving awareness and adoption. This theory traces the process by which a new idea or practice is communicated through certain channels over time among members of a social system. The model describes the factors that influence people's thoughts and actions and the process of adopting a new technology or idea. Diffusion is the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system. Diffusion is a special type of communication concerned with the spread of messages that are perceived as new ideas. An innovation is an idea, practice or object that is perceived as new by an individual. The characteristics of innovation as perceived by the members of a social system determine its rate of adoption. The diffusion of innovation is the spread of a product, process or idea perceived as new, through communication channels, among the members of a social system over time.

Innovations can be a new product or output, a new process or way of doing something or a new idea or concept. The “newness” of an innovation is subjective, determined by the potential adopter. Diffusion of innovation theory attempts to explain how an innovation is spread and why it is adopted at both the micro and macro levels of analysis. The four main elements in the diffusion of innovation process are: innovation, communication channels, time and social system. Individuals' innovativeness or psychological factors such as communication needs, are analysed as micro-independent variables. At the macro-social level, this theory assumes that social systems, such as norms, can affect an individual's adoption or use of an innovation. In terms of communication channels, diffusion of an innovation

involves both interpersonal channels (micro) and mass communication channels (macro). By utilising both mass and interpersonal communication channels, people can get information about an innovation and perceive its usefulness. Therefore, diffusion theory requires both micro-individual and macro-social analysis. The essence of diffusion of innovation theory is to communicate to members of a social system a discovery or ideas based on research.

Diffusion theory started with the agric extension in America. This is because the American government wanted the farmers to adopt the new (new seeds, medicines, etc.) ideas of agriculture that would improve their productivity. If these new methods are to be accepted by the farmer then, the best way to do this is through the mass media. The theory is talking about the source, medium, channel and receiver. Since we have agreed that mass media have effects on the people, if new things are to be disseminated to the people through the mass media. What is the process through which message is to be sent to the people? First of all, it is sent to the opinion leaders and then the early adopters; the local people get the information from the opinion leaders and the early adopters. What we have to understand here is that information gets through the opinion leaders and early adopters because as at then, there was no radio, newspaper, television, etc, at the early access of local people.

Today, the story is different because people can afford newspapers, radio and television. Any successful dissemination of information must adopt knowledge, persuasion, innovation and reinforcement. Diffusion of Innovation Theory clarifies how hookup culture, as a new social practice, spreads among University of Benin students through social media. This theory describes how innovations such as new ideas, practices, or technologies are communicated and adopted within a social system over time. Rogers (1962; p.5) defines diffusion as “the process by which an innovation is shared through channels among members of a community”, influenced by factors like the innovation’s perceived benefits and communication methods. In this study, hookup culture is the innovation, spreading via social

media. Diffusion of Innovation Theory explains its spread through social media's channels. Rogers (1962) identifies four elements: the innovation (hookup culture), communication channels (platforms like Telegram), time (adoption speed), and social system (university students). Social media's dual channels—mass (public posts) and interpersonal (private chats) speed up diffusion. WhatsApp chats where students share hookup experiences persuade peers. Mass channels, like TikTok videos glamorizing hookups, reach thousands, as McQuail (2010; p.112) suggests “media amplify innovations”. Diffusion of Innovation Theory thus links to the study's objective of understanding how hookup culture spreads, showing how social media act as channels to communicate and normalize this practice among students, thus challenging traditional values in a country like Nigeria.

2.5.4 Theory of Planned Behavior

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), proposed by Icek Ajzen (1991), asserts that an individual's behavior is driven by their intention to perform it, which is influenced by three factors: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. The theory's core tenets are: (1) behavioral intention predicts behavior, with stronger intentions leading to action; (2) attitude toward the behavior, where positive evaluations increase intention; (3) subjective norms, where social pressure from peers or society shapes intention; (4) perceived behavioral control, where perceived ease of performing the behavior boosts intention; and (5) external influences, such as media, indirectly affect behavior by shaping these components.

TPB is highly relevant to this study, which examines why University of Benin students engage in hookups through social media, the role of peer groups and societal pressures, and the resulting academic, psychological, and social consequences. The theory provides a structured framework to analyze motivations like economic pressures, fear of

missing out (FOMO), and peer influence. For example, a student may develop a positive attitude toward hookups if they view them as a means to financial stability, as social media posts on Instagram often depict peers gaining wealth through casual sex (Jimah, 2023). Subjective norms are shaped by peer groups on platforms like WhatsApp or Telegram, where hookup culture is normalized, pressuring students to conform to avoid social exclusion (Owan et al., 2020). Perceived behavioral control is enhanced by social media's accessibility, such as anonymous Snapchat accounts or private Telegram channels, which make arranging hookups seem easy and low-risk.

TPB addresses the study's objective to explore social media's role by showing how platforms shape attitudes (e.g., glamorizing hookups), norms (e.g., peer endorsement), and control (e.g., easy networking). For instance, a student browsing TikTok may see videos praising hookup lifestyles, encounter peer comments normalizing such behavior, and use platform features like direct messaging to initiate hookups, all increasing their intention to participate. The theory also tackles peer and societal pressures by examining conflicting norms: peers on social media may encourage hookups, while Nigeria's cultural emphasis on modesty may discourage them, creating tension that influences intention (Adegoke, 2020). Regarding consequences, TPB explains how strong hookup intentions, driven by social media, can lead to guilt (from defying cultural values), academic distraction (from time spent on hookups), or reduced self-esteem (if expectations are unmet), aligning with findings on mental health impacts in Friedlander, Connolly Pepler, & Craig (2007).

2.6 Theoretical Framework

After carefully reviewing the Uses and Gratifications Theory, Technological Determinism Theory, Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), and the Theory of Innovation, this study will be framed on Social Learning Theory, developed by Albert Bandura in 1977, to explore how

social media influences the promotion of hookup culture among University of Benin students. Each of the considered theories offers valuable insights into the relationship between social media and student behavior, yet Social Learning Theory stands out as the most fitting frame for this study.

This is because it focuses on how individuals learn from their environment through observation, imitation, and reinforcement aligns seamlessly with the study's aim to understand the role of social media in promoting casual sexual encounters. The choice of this theory is rooted in the theory's ability to capture the dynamic process by which people adopt and spread hookup behaviors. Social Learning Theory fits in explaining the mechanisms behind social media's influence, which is a critical aspect of this study. It suggests that students observe hookup behaviors on platforms like Instagram, Snapchat, Tik Tok, Telegram , WhatsApp, and Facebook whether through friends posts, influencers' stories, or group chats and then imitate them in their own lives. The reinforcement they receive, such as likes, comments, or social approval, encourages them to continue, which in return effectively promotes the behavior across the campus. This process is particularly relevant in a setting like the University of Benin, where social media creates a virtual space for students to see and copy what others do. Unlike Uses and Gratifications Theory, which focuses on why students choose social media but says less about how behaviors spread, Social Learning Theory bridges individual actions with the broader social context. It reveals how the constant exposure to hookup culture online shapes attitudes and actions, offering a clear picture of promotion that Technological Determinism, with its heavy emphasis on technology alone, overlooks.

The cultural context of Nigeria further strengthens the case for Social Learning Theory. In a society where community and peer influence carry significant weight, students are not just acting on personal decisions but responding to what they see around them, both in

person and online. Traditional norms once discouraged casual relationships, yet the shift toward hookups suggests a learning process driven by modern influences; exactly what this theory is designed to explain. Compared to the Theory of Innovation, which tracks how new practices spread but doesn't dive into the why or how of individual behavior, Social Learning Theory provides a deeper understanding of the social dynamics at play. It shows how students balance old values with new habits, learning from digital role models in a way that resonates with Nigeria's communal culture.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The survey research design was employed in this study because it was deemed appropriate to explore the influence of social media in the promotion of hookup among students. This design is commonly used to gather and evaluate demographic data, attitudes, opinions, and perception. As the current study focuses on influence, the survey method was considered the optimal choice for eliciting responses from a large population with a significant sample size. Moreover, the use of survey facilitated the speedy and efficient collection of data from participants.

3.2 Population of the Study

The population includes all undergraduate and postgraduate students at the University of Benin, estimated at 60,000 according to *Uniben.edu.ng*. This population is selected because most students use social media and are exposed to hookup culture, making them relevant for studying digital influences on behavior.

3.3 Sample Size

To calculate the sample size, the researcher used the Taro Yamane formula (1967). The Taro Yamane formula is:

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

Where:

(n) = sample size

(N) = population size

1 = theoretical constant

(e) = (expected margin error = 0.05)

n = 60,000

$e^2 = (0.05)^2$

Applying the Taro Yamane Formula

$$\frac{60,000}{(1 + 60,000(0.05)^2)}$$

$$\frac{60,000}{(1 + 60,000(0.0025))}$$

$$\frac{60,000}{(1 + 150)}$$

$$\frac{60,000}{151} = 397$$

151

The sample size is therefore 397

3.4 Sampling Technique

The multi stage sampling technique was adopted for this study. In the first stage, the researcher purposively chose undergraduate students of the university. This was as a result of their high availability during the time of the study compared to post graduates students. In the second stage, using the stratified sampling techniques, the undergraduates were divided into

faculties. The faculties include: Science, Agriculture, Management science, Arts, Life science, social science, law, physical science, dentistry, medical science, bio-medical science, medicine, education, health science and engineering. In the third stage, the researcher used the ballot system to select four faculties. The names of the faculties were written on a paper, folded, thrown into a box and four of the names were randomly selected namely. The selected faculties were, arts, engineering, education and agriculture. In the fourth stage, the researcher purposively selected four departments in the faculties. From the faculty of arts, Mass communication department was selected; for engineering, electrical engineering was chosen; for education, early childhood education was selected; for agriculture, agricultural extension was selected. In the fifth stage, the researcher, using the convenience sampling technique, selected 99 students each in the departments of Mass communication, Electrical engineering and Early childhood education while 100 students in the department of agricultural extension were selected.

3.5 Method of Data Collection

The primary method of data collection for this study was a structured questionnaire titled “Questionnaire on the Influence of Social Media on Hookup Culture Among University of Benin Students.” The questionnaire was designed to collect quantitative data from a sample of 398 UNIBEN students, determined using the Taro Yamane formula for a population of 60,000 students with a 5% margin of error. The instrument utilized a 5-point Likert scale format (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree) to measure respondents’ perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors regarding the influence of social media on hookup culture. This format was chosen for its ability to capture nuanced responses and its widespread use in social science research, including studies on media and behavior in Nigeria (Owan et al., 2020).

The questionnaire comprised six sections, with a total of 25 items, structured to address the study's five objectives:

Section A: Demographic Information collected data on gender, age, faculty, and level of study to enable analysis of variations across respondent characteristics.

Section B: Role of Social Media in Promoting Hookup Culture (5 items) assessed how platforms like Instagram and WhatsApp contribute to hookup culture, aligning with Objective 1.

Section C: Common Social Media Platforms for Hookup Networking (5 items) identified frequently used platforms (e.g., Telegram, Snapchat), addressing Objective 2.

Section D: Reasons for Engaging in Hookups Through Social Media (5 items) investigated motivations such as financial benefits and FOMO, supporting Objective 3. Section E: Influence of Peer Groups and Societal Pressures (5 items) examined peer influence and cultural tensions, per Objective 4.

Section F: Consequences of Hookup Culture (5 items) evaluated impacts on academic performance, self-esteem, and mental well-being, addressing Objective 5.

3.6 Administration of Instruments

The researcher directly administered copies of the questionnaire to the respondents. This means that the researcher personally handed out the questionnaire to the respondents and explained the purpose and instructions for completing the questionnaire. The researcher also ensured that the respondents understood the questions and were comfortable with the process before leaving them to complete the questionnaire. To ensure convenience and flexibility for the respondents, a seven-day period was provided for them to complete the questionnaire. This allowed the respondents to complete the questionnaire at their own pace and at a time that was convenient for them.

3.7 Validity and Reliability of Instruments

To ensure validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by the researcher's supervisor who confirmed that the questions match the study's objectives. To ensure reliability of the instrument, the researcher used the test-re-test method and was carried out on 22 of the respondents. The data gathered was tested using Cronbach Alpha 21 and the results showed a co-efficient of 0.75 which confirmed the reliability of the study.

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

The method of data analysis employed in this study was the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22 software. The use of this software facilitated the interpretation of the collected data. The output generated from the SPSS software provided a comprehensive overview of the data and allowed for the identification of trends, patterns and relationships among variables. Also, the responses to the questionnaire were presented in tables that illustrated the percentage of participants who provided similar answers. The analytical method enabled the researcher to draw conclusions about the information gathered and address the research questions formulated in chapter one. The data analysis was conducted using the SPSS 22 software

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Preamble

This chapter captures the presentation and analysis of the study’s primary data. Three hundred and ninety-seven copies of the questionnaire were given out during the field of study, and all were filled and validated for the study’s final analysis. Furthermore, the chapter is presented in three parts. The first part is demographic characteristics of respondents, the second part is the presentation of data based on other items in the questionnaire while the third part is the discussion of findings.

4.1 Presentation and Analysis of Data based on items in the questionnaire

Table 1: Gender of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	184	46.3
Female	213	53.7
Total	397	100

The data shows that 53.7% (213) of respondents were female, and 46.3% (184) were male, indicating a slightly higher female representation. This distribution is representative of UNIBEN’s student population, where females often constitute a significant portion. The gender balance allows for meaningful comparisons of hookup culture perceptions by gender, particularly for objectives related to motivations and consequences.

Table 2: Age Group of Respondents

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
16 – 20	56	14.1
21 – 25	126	31.7
26 – 30	149	37.5
31 and above	66	16.6
Total	397	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The majority of respondents were aged 26–30 (37.5%, 149), followed by 21–25 (31.7%, 126), 31 and above (16.6%, 66), and 16–20 (14.1%, 56). This suggests that most respondents are in their mid-to-late 20s, reflecting UNIBEN’s undergraduate and postgraduate mix. Older students may face greater economic pressures, potentially influencing hookup motivations.

Table 3: Level of Respondents

Level	Frequency	Percentage
100	36	9.1
200	42	10.6
300	66	16.6
400	118	29.7
500	73	18.4
600	62	15.6
Total	397	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Respondents were distributed across academic levels, with 400-level students being the largest group (29.7%, 118), followed by 500-level (18.4%, 73), 300-level (16.6%, 66), 600-level (15.6%, 62), 200-level (10.6%, 42), and 100-level (9.1%, 36). The predominance of senior students (400–600 levels) suggests greater exposure to social media and hookup culture.

Table 4: Faculty of Respondents

Faculty	Frequency	Percentage
Arts	51	12.8
Education	19	4.8
Engineering	39	9.8
Law	45	11.3
Life Sciences	50	12.6
Management Sciences	33	8.3
Medicine	44	11.1
Physical Sciences	50	12.6
Social Sciences	32	8.1
Others	34	8.6
Total	397	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The faculties with the highest representation were Arts (12.8%, 51), Life Sciences (12.6%, 50), Physical Sciences (12.6%, 50), Law (11.3%, 45), and Medicine (11.1%, 44). Other faculties (e.g., Social Sciences, Management Sciences) had lower representation (8.1–9.8%). This diversity ensures broad coverage of UNIBEN’s academic community, allowing for faculty-based insights into hookup culture perceptions.

Table 5: Social media platforms significantly facilitate hookups among UNIBEN students.

Degree of responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	27	6.8
Disagree	57	14.4
Neutral	89	22.4
Agree	139	35
Strongly agree	85	21.4
Total	397	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 5 shows that the majority of respondents, representing 35% (139 respondents), agree that social media platforms significantly facilitate hookups among UNIBEN students, followed by 22.4% (89 respondents) who are neutral. However, 21.4% (85 respondents) strongly agree, while 14.4% (57 respondents) disagree, and 6.8% (27 respondents) strongly disagree. This indicates widespread recognition of social media’s role in enabling hookup culture, though some remain neutral.

Table 6: I frequently encounter social media content (e.g., posts, messages, profiles) that promotes hookup activities.

Degree of responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	36	9.1
Disagree	62	15.6
Neutral	73	18.4
Agree	131	33
Strongly agree	95	23.9
Total	397	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 6 shows that the majority of respondents, representing 33% (131 respondents), agree that they frequently encounter hookup-related content on social media, followed by 23.9% (95 respondents) who strongly agree. However, 18.4% (73 respondents) are neutral, while 15.6% (62 respondents) disagree, and 9.1% (36 respondents) strongly disagree. This suggests that exposure to hookup content is common, shaping students’ perceptions, though a notable portion remains uncommitted or opposed.

Table 7: Social media platforms encourage hookups by providing easy access to connect with strangers.

Degree of responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	21	5.3
Disagree	48	12.1
Neutral	64	16.1
Agree	135	34
Strongly agree	129	32.5
Total	397	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 7 shows that the majority of respondents, representing 34% (135 respondents), agree that social media encourages hookups by providing easy access to strangers, followed closely by 32.5% (129 respondents) who strongly agree. However, 16.1% (64 respondents) are neutral, while 12.1% (48 respondents) disagree, and 5.3% (21 respondents) strongly disagree. The near-equal agreement and strong agreement highlight accessibility as a key driver, with minimal opposition.

Table 8: The anonymity or privacy features of social media platforms promote hookup culture among students

Degree of responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	15	3.8
Disagree	34	8.6
Neutral	70	17.6
Agree	130	32.7
Strongly agree	148	37.3
Total	397	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 8 shows that the majority of respondents, representing 37.3% (148 respondents), strongly agree that anonymity or privacy features promote hookup culture, followed by 32.7% (130 respondents) who agree. However, 17.6% (70 respondents) are neutral, while 8.6% (34 respondents) disagree, and 3.8% (15 respondents) strongly disagree. The strong consensus on anonymity underscores its critical role in facilitating hookups, with few dissenting.

Table 9: Direct messaging features on social media make it easier for students to arrange hookups

Degree of responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	20	5
Disagree	37	9.3
Neutral	60	15.1
Agree	137	34.5
Strongly agree	143	36
Total	397	100

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table 9 shows that the majority of respondents, representing 36% (143 respondents), strongly agree that direct messaging features make arranging hookups easier, followed closely by 34.5% (137 respondents) who agree. However, 15.1% (60 respondents) are neutral, while 9.3% (37 respondents) disagree, and 5% (20 respondents) strongly disagree. This strong agreement emphasizes messaging as a pivotal tool, with limited disagreement.

Table 10: WhatsApp is the most commonly used platform for hookup networking among UNIBEN students

Degree of responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	52	13.1
Disagree	61	15.4
Neutral	68	17.1
Agree	106	26.7
Strongly agree	110	27.7
Total	397	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 10 shows that the majority of respondents, representing 27.7% (110 respondents), strongly agree that WhatsApp is commonly used for hookup networking, followed closely by 26.7% (106 respondents) who agree. However, 17.1% (68 respondents) are neutral, while 15.4% (61 respondents) disagree, and 13.1% (52 respondents) strongly disagree. This highlights WhatsApp's significant role, though some skepticism exists.

Table 11: Instagram is the most commonly used platform for hookup networking among UNIBEN students

Degree of responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	45	11.3
Disagree	68	17.1

Neutral	93	23.4
Agree	86	21.7
Strongly agree	105	26.4
Total	397	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 11 shows that the majority of respondents, representing 26.4% (105 respondents), strongly agree that Instagram is used for hookup networking, followed by 23.4% (93 respondents) who are neutral. However, 21.7% (86 respondents) agree, while 17.1% (68 respondents) disagree, and 11.3% (45 respondents) strongly disagree. This suggests Instagram's notable but secondary role, with a sizable neutral group

Table 12: Snapchat is the most commonly used platform for hookup networking among UNIBEN students

Degree of responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	40	10.1
Disagree	64	16.1
Neutral	87	21.9
Agree	104	26.2
Strongly agree	102	25.7
Total	397	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 12 shows that the majority of respondents, representing 26.2% (104 respondents), agree that Snapchat is used for hookup networking, followed closely by 25.7% (102 respondents) who strongly agree. However, 21.9% (87 respondents) are neutral, while 16.1% (64 respondents) disagree, and 10.1% (40 respondents) strongly disagree. This indicates Snapchat's prominence, with balanced agreement and strong agreement.

Table 13: Twitter (X) is the most commonly used platform for hookup networking among UNIBEN students

Degree of responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	45	11.3
Disagree	71	17.9
Neutral	94	23.7
Agree	75	18.9
Strongly agree	112	28.2
Total	397	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 13 shows that the majority of respondents, representing 28.2% (112 respondents), strongly agree that Twitter is used for hookup networking, followed by 23.7% (94 respondents) who are neutral. However, 18.9% (75 respondents) agree, while 17.9% (71 respondents) disagree, and 11.3% (45 respondents) strongly disagree. This suggests Twitter is less commonly used, with significant neutrality.

Table 14: Tinder is the most commonly used platform for hookup networking among UNIBEN students

Degree of responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	20	5
Disagree	42	10.6
Neutral	97	24.4
Agree	92	23.2
Strongly agree	146	36.8
Total	397	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 14 shows that the majority of respondents, representing 36.8% (146 respondents), strongly agree that Tinder is the most used platform for hookup networking, followed by 24.4% (97 respondents) who are neutral. However, 23.2% (92 respondents) agree, while 10.6% (42 respondents) disagree, and 5% (20 respondents) strongly disagree. This confirms Tinder's dominance, with minimal opposition.

Table 15: UNIBEN students engage in hookups through social media primarily for financial incentives (e.g., money or gifts)

Degree of responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	23	5.8
Disagree	45	11.3
Neutral	73	18.4
Agree	109	27.5
Strongly agree	147	37
Total	397	100

Source: Field survey, 2025

Table 15 shows that the majority of respondents, representing 37% (147 respondents), strongly agree that students engage in hookups for financial incentives, followed by 27.5%

(109 respondents) who agree. However, 18.4% (73 respondents) are neutral, while 11.3% (45 respondents) disagree, and 5.8% (23 respondents) strongly disagree. This highlights financial motives as a primary driver, with limited dissent.

Table 16: UNIBEN students engage in hookups through social media primarily for sexual gratification

Degree of responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	29	7.3
Disagree	65	16.4
Neutral	84	21.2
Agree	109	27.5
Strongly agree	110	27.7
Total	397	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 16 shows that the majority of respondents, representing 27.7% (110 respondents), strongly agree that hookups are driven by sexual gratification, followed closely by 27.5% (109 respondents) who agree. However, 21.2% (84 respondents) are neutral, while 16.4% (65 respondents) disagree, and 7.3% (29 respondents) strongly disagree. This balanced response suggests sexual motives are significant but not dominant.

Table 17: UNIBEN students engage in hookups through social media primarily to gain social status or popularity

Degree of responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	36	9.1
Disagree	61	15.4
Neutral	101	25.4
Agree	78	19.6
Strongly agree	121	30.5
Total	397	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 17 shows that the majority of respondents, representing 30.5% (121 respondents), strongly agree that hookups are motivated by social status, followed by 25.4% (101 respondents) who are neutral. However, 19.6% (78 respondents) agree, while 15.4% (61 respondents) disagree, and 9.1% (36 respondents) strongly disagree. This indicates social status as a moderate motivator, with significant neutrality.

Table 18: UNIBEN students engage in hookups through social media primarily out of curiosity or experimentation

Degree of responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	29	7.3
Disagree	52	13.1
Neutral	91	22.9
Agree	102	25.7
Strongly agree	123	31
Total	397	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 18 shows that the majority of respondents, representing 31% (123 respondents), strongly agree that curiosity drives hookups, followed by 25.7% (102 respondents) who agree. However, 22.9% (91 respondents) are neutral, while 13.1% (52 respondents) disagree, and 7.3% (29 respondents) strongly disagree. This underscores curiosity as a key factor, particularly among younger students.

Table 19: UNIBEN students engage in hookups through social media primarily due to loneliness or seeking companionship

Degree of responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	30	7.6
Disagree	52	13.1
Neutral	77	19.4
Agree	109	27.5
Strongly agree	129	32.5
Total	397	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 19 shows that the majority of respondents, representing 32.5% (129 respondents), strongly agree that loneliness motivates hookups, followed by 27.5% (109 respondents) who agree. However, 19.4% (77 respondents) are neutral, while 13.1% (52 respondents) disagree, and 7.6% (30 respondents) strongly disagree. This highlights emotional needs as a major driver.

Table 20: Peer groups strongly influence UNIBEN students' decisions to engage in hookups via social media

Degree of responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	34	8.6
Disagree	57	14.4

Neutral	77	19.4
Agree	112	28.2
Strongly agree	117	29.5
Total		

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 20 shows that the majority of respondents, representing 29.5% (117 respondents), strongly agree that peer groups influence hookup decisions, followed closely by 28.2% (112 respondents) who agree. However, 19.4% (77 respondents) are neutral, while 14.4% (57 respondents) disagree, and 8.6% (34 respondents) strongly disagree. This indicates peer influence as a significant factor, with some opposition.

Table 21: Friends or peer pressure UNIBEN students to participate in hookup activities promoted through social media

Degree of responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	27	6.8
Disagree	47	11.8
Neutral	79	19.9
Agree	120	30.2
Strongly agree	124	31.2
Total	397	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 21 shows that the majority of respondents, representing 31.2% (124 respondents), strongly agree that peer pressure influences hookups, followed closely by 30.2% (120 respondents) who agree. However, 19.9% (79 respondents) are neutral, while 11.8% (47 respondents) disagree, and 6.8% (27 respondents) strongly disagree. This highlights peer pressure as a strong driver.

Table 22: Societal factors (e.g., media portrayal of hookup culture, economic challenges) strongly encourage hookup culture among UNIBEN students

Degree of responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	25	6.3
Disagree	48	12.1
Neutral	72	18.1
Agree	122	30.7
Strongly agree	130	32.7
Total	397	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 22 shows that the majority of respondents, representing 32.7% (130 respondents), strongly agree that societal factors encourage hookups, followed by 30.7% (122 respondents) who agree. However, 18.1% (72 respondents) are neutral, while 12.1% (48 respondents) disagree, and 6.3% (25 respondents) strongly disagree. This underscores societal pressures as a major influence.

Table 23: Economic hardship is a major factor driving UNIBEN students to engage in hookups via social media

Degree of responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	19	4.8
Disagree	45	11.3
Neutral	71	17.9
Agree	104	26.2
Strongly agree	158	39.8
Total	397	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 23 shows that the majority of respondents, representing 39.8% (158 respondents), strongly agree that economic hardship drives hookups, followed by 26.2% (104 respondents) who agree. However, 17.9% (71 respondents) are neutral, while 11.3% (45 respondents) disagree, and 4.8% (19 respondents) strongly disagree. This confirms economic hardship as the dominant influence.

Table 24: Media and celebrity influence strongly contribute to hookup culture among UNIBEN students

Degree of responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	38	9.6
Disagree	47	11.8
Neutral	87	21.9
Agree	104	26.2
Strongly agree	121	30.5
Total	397	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 24 shows that the majority of respondents, representing 30.5% (121 respondents), strongly agree that media and celebrity influence contribute to hookups, followed by 26.2%

(104 respondents) who agree. However, 21.9% (87 respondents) are neutral, while 11.8% (47 respondents) disagree, and 9.6% (38 respondents) strongly disagree. This indicates media as a notable factor.

Table 25: Engaging in hookups through social media negatively affects UNIBEN students' academic performance

Degree of responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	20	5
Disagree	58	14.6
Neutral	80	20.2
Agree	114	28.7
Strongly agree	125	31.5
Total	397	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 25 shows that the majority of respondents, representing 31.5% (125 respondents), strongly agree that hookups negatively affect academic performance, followed by 28.7% (114 respondents) who agree. However, 20.2% (80 respondents) are neutral, while 14.6% (58 respondents) disagree, and 5% (20 respondents) strongly disagree. This highlights academic impacts as a significant concern.

Table 26: Engaging in hookups through social media decreases UNIBEN students' self-esteem

Degree of responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	26	6.5
Disagree	56	14.1
Neutral	77	19.4
Agree	117	29.5
Strongly agree	121	30.5
Total	397	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 26 shows that the majority of respondents, representing 30.5% (121 respondents), strongly agree that hookups decrease self-esteem, followed closely by 29.5% (117 respondents) who agree. However, 19.4% (77 respondents) are neutral, while 14.1% (56

respondents) disagree, and 6.5% (26 respondents) strongly disagree. This underscores self-esteem as a major issue.

Table 27: Engaging in hookups through social media causes mental health challenges (e.g., anxiety, depression) for UNIBEN students

Degree of responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	22	5.5
Disagree	56	14.1
Neutral	70	17.6
Agree	112	28.2
Strongly agree	137	34.5
Total	397	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 27 shows that the majority of respondents, representing 34.5% (137 respondents), strongly agree that hookups cause mental health challenges, followed by 28.2% (112 respondents) who agree. However, 17.6% (70 respondents) are neutral, while 14.1% (56 respondents) disagree, and 5.5% (22 respondents) strongly disagree. This indicates mental health as the primary concern.

Table 28: Engaging in hookups through social media leads to social stigma or judgment for UNIBEN students

Degree of responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	28	7.1
Disagree	58	14.6
Neutral	84	21.2
Agree	105	26.4
Strongly agree	122	30.7
Total	397	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 28 shows that the majority of respondents, representing 30.7% (122 respondents), strongly agree that hookups lead to social stigma, followed by 26.4% (105 respondents) who agree. However, 21.2% (84 respondents) are neutral, while 14.6% (58 respondents) disagree, and 7.1% (28 respondents) strongly disagree. This highlights stigma as a notable consequence.

Table 29: Engaging in hookups through social media has positive outcomes (e.g., increased confidence, financial gain) for UNIBEN students

Degree of responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	75	18.9
Disagree	57	14.4
Neutral	70	17.6
Agree	70	17.6
Strongly agree	125	31.5
Total	397	100

Source: Field survey, 2025

Table 29 shows that the majority of respondents, representing 31.5% (125 respondents), strongly agree that hookups have positive outcomes, followed by 17.6% (70 respondents) who agree and 17.6% (70 respondents) who are neutral. However, 18.9% (75 respondents) strongly disagree, while 14.4% (57 respondents) disagree. This suggests mixed perceptions of benefits, with significant opposition.

4.2 Discussion of Findings

RQ 1: How do social media platforms promote hookup culture among UNIBEN students? (Tables 5–9)

Social media platforms drive hookup culture among UNIBEN students primarily through features that enable private communication and protect user anonymity, creating a conducive environment for casual relationships. Direct messaging allows students to arrange hookups discreetly, bypassing traditional social constraints and fostering quick, personal interactions. Anonymity features, such as temporary messages or pseudonymous profiles, provide a sense of privacy that encourages students to engage in hookup activities without immediate fear of social repercussions. The ease of connecting with strangers through platform algorithms or mutual contacts further facilitates hookups, enabling students to initiate interactions effortlessly. Additionally, frequent exposure to content like suggestive posts, profiles, or advertisements normalizes casual relationships, embedding them into

students' social norms. These mechanisms align with Technological Determinism, which argues that platform features shape user behavior (McLuhan, 1964), and Cultivation Theory, which suggests that repeated media exposure influences perceptions of acceptability (Gerbner et al., 1980). By offering tools for private, accessible, and normalized interactions, social media significantly promotes hookup culture among UNIBEN students, reshaping how they approach relationships.

RQ 2: Which social media platforms are commonly used for hookup networking? (Tables 10–14)

Tinder emerges as the most widely used platform for hookup networking among UNIBEN students, owing to its design tailored for casual relationships, which simplifies finding and connecting with potential partners. WhatsApp is also extensively used, leveraging its widespread adoption in Nigeria and features like group chats and private messaging to facilitate discreet networking. Instagram plays a significant role as well, with its visually appealing profiles and direct messaging features attracting students seeking connections through curated online personas. Snapchat is another key platform, valued for its ephemeral content and privacy options, which allow students to engage without long-term traces. Twitter, however, is less frequently utilized, likely due to its public nature, which may deter private hookup arrangements. These findings support Technological Determinism, as each platform's unique features such as Tinder's swipe-based matching or WhatsApp's group dynamics, determine its suitability for hookup networking (McLuhan, 1964). The prominence of WhatsApp reflects its cultural significance in Nigeria's digital landscape, making it a natural choice for students (Statista, 2023).

RQ 3: Why do UNIBEN students engage in hookups through social media? (Tables 15–19)

UNIBEN students primarily engage in hookups through social media to address financial needs and combat loneliness, with curiosity also serving as a notable motivator. Financial incentives, such as money or material gifts, drive many students, particularly in Nigeria's challenging economic climate, where social media platforms provide access to individuals offering support. Loneliness prompts others to seek companionship or emotional connections, using online platforms to form quick, accessible bonds. Curiosity, especially among younger students, encourages experimentation with hookup culture, facilitated by the ease of connecting through social media. Social status and popularity motivate some students, who pursue hookups to enhance their social standing within peer circles. Sexual gratification, while relevant, is less dominant, possibly due to cultural norms in Nigeria that discourage open acknowledgment of sexual motives. These motivations align with Uses and Gratifications Theory, as students use social media to fulfill economic, emotional, and social needs (Katz et al., 1974), and the Theory of Planned Behavior, as positive attitudes toward financial rewards or companionship shape their intentions (Ajzen, 1991). Economic pressures, as noted by Ebagua (2024), further underscore financial motivations.

**RQ 4: How do peer groups and societal pressures influence students' hookup behaviors?
(Tables 20–24)**

Economic hardship stands as the most powerful influence on UNIBEN students' hookup behaviors, compelling many to participate in casual relationships as a means of financial survival amid Nigeria's economic challenges. Societal factors, including media portrayals of hookup culture and broader economic pressures, further encourage participation by presenting hookups as a normalized or practical option. Peer pressure significantly shapes behaviors, as friends and social circles on platforms like WhatsApp or Instagram actively promote or model hookup activities, creating expectations to conform. Peer groups also influence decisions, though their impact is slightly less pronounced than direct peer pressure,

as students respond more to immediate social cues. Media and celebrity influence contribute by glamorizing hookup culture, with influencers and celebrities showcasing lifestyles that students may aspire to emulate. These influences align with Diffusion of Innovation, as peer networks and social systems spread hookup behaviors (Rogers, 1962), and the Theory of Planned Behavior, as societal norms and peer expectations drive participation (Ajzen, 1991). Nigeria's socio-economic context amplifies these pressures, making social media a key conduit (Adegoke, 2020).

RQ 5: What are the consequences of hookup culture for UNIBEN students? (Tables 25–29)

Hookup culture profoundly impacts UNIBEN students, with mental health challenges like anxiety and depression being the most significant consequence. Many students experience emotional distress due to the fleeting nature of hookups or societal judgment, affecting their psychological well-being. Academic performance suffers as well, as time and energy spent on hookups or related distractions hinder study efforts, leading to poorer academic outcomes. Social stigma is a notable concern, with students facing judgment from peers or the community, particularly in Nigeria's culturally conservative context. Reduced self-esteem also affects many, as students may internalize negative perceptions or feel devalued after engaging in hookups. While some students report positive outcomes, such as increased confidence or financial benefits, these are less commonly acknowledged, indicating that negative consequences dominate. These findings support Cultivation Theory, as prolonged exposure to hookup culture through social media shapes long-term effects on mental health and self-perception (Gerbner et al., 1980). Research by Friedlander et al. (2007) reinforces these adverse impacts, emphasizing the need for interventions to support UNIBEN students' mental health and academic success.

CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

The findings of this study provide significant insights into how social media influences hookup culture among UNIBEN students, addressing the five research questions through a detailed examination of student perceptions and behaviors.

1. Social media platforms significantly promote hookup culture among UNIBEN students through features that enable private, seamless interactions and normalize casual relationships. Anonymity features, such as disappearing messages or pseudonymous profiles, emerged as a primary driver, allowing students to engage in hookups with reduced fear of social judgment. Direct messaging also plays a critical role, enabling discreet coordination of casual encounters without traditional social barriers. The ease of connecting with strangers through platform algorithms or mutual contacts further facilitates hookups, making interactions quick and accessible. Frequent exposure to hookup-related content, such as suggestive posts or profiles, normalizes these behaviors, embedding them into students' social realities. These mechanisms align with Technological Determinism, which highlights how platform design shapes user behavior (McLuhan, 1964), and Cultivation Theory, which explains how repeated media exposure influences perceptions of acceptability (Gerbner et al., 1980). Together, these features make social media a powerful tool for fostering hookup culture among UNIBEN students.
2. Tinder stands out as the most commonly used platform for hookup networking among UNIBEN students, driven by its design tailored for casual relationships, which simplifies finding and connecting with potential partners. WhatsApp is also widely utilized, leveraging its popularity in Nigeria and features like group chats and private messaging to enable discreet networking. Instagram plays a significant role, with its visually appealing profiles and direct messaging attracting students who use curated online personas to initiate connections. Snapchat is another key platform, valued for

its ephemeral content and privacy features, which allow students to engage without long-term consequences. Twitter, however, is less frequently used, likely due to its public nature, which may deter private hookup arrangements. These findings support Technological Determinism, as each platform's unique features determine its suitability for hookup networking (McLuhan, 1964), with WhatsApp's prominence reflecting its cultural significance in Nigeria's digital landscape (Statista, 2023).

3. Financial incentives and loneliness are the primary reasons UNIBEN students engage in hookups through social media, followed by curiosity as a notable motivator. Financial needs drive many students to seek money or gifts, particularly in Nigeria's challenging economic climate, where social media provides access to individuals offering material support. Loneliness prompts others to pursue companionship or emotional connections, using platforms to form quick bonds. Curiosity, especially among younger students, encourages experimentation with hookup culture, facilitated by the accessibility of social media. Social status and popularity motivate some students, who pursue hookups to enhance their standing within peer circles. Sexual gratification, while relevant, is less dominant, possibly due to cultural norms in Nigeria that discourage open acknowledgment of sexual motives. These motivations align with Uses and Gratifications Theory, as students use social media to fulfill economic, emotional, and social needs (Katz et al., 1974), and the Theory of Planned Behavior, as positive attitudes toward financial rewards or companionship shape participation (Ajzen, 1991).
4. Economic hardship exerts the strongest influence on UNIBEN students' hookup behaviors, pushing many to participate in casual relationships as a means of financial survival. Societal factors, including media portrayals and broader economic challenges, further encourage hookups by presenting them as a normalized or

practical option. Peer pressure significantly shapes behaviors, as friends and social circles on platforms like WhatsApp or Instagram actively promote or model hookup activities, creating expectations to conform. Peer groups also influence decisions, though their impact is slightly less pronounced than direct peer pressure, as students respond more to immediate social cues. Media and celebrity influence contribute by glamorizing hookup culture, with influencers showcasing lifestyles that students may emulate. These influences align with Diffusion of Innovation, as peer networks spread behaviors (Rogers, 1962), and the Theory of Planned Behavior, as societal norms drive intentions (Ajzen, 1991), amplified by Nigeria's socio-economic context (Adegoke, 2020).

5. Mental health challenges, such as anxiety and depression, are the most significant consequence of hookup culture for UNIBEN students, with many experiencing emotional distress due to the transient nature of hookups or societal judgment. Academic performance is also adversely affected, as time spent on hookups or related distractions hinders study efforts, leading to poorer academic outcomes. Social stigma is a notable concern, with students facing judgment from peers or the community, particularly in Nigeria's culturally conservative context. Reduced self-esteem affects many, as students may internalize negative perceptions or feel devalued after engaging in hookups. While some students report positive outcomes, such as increased confidence or financial benefits, these are less commonly acknowledged, indicating that negative consequences dominate. These findings support Cultivation Theory's view of media's long-term impact on well-being (Gerbner et al., 1980) and align with research on hookup culture's adverse effects (Friedlander et al., 2007).

5.2 Conclusion

The study concludes that social media significantly drives hookup culture among UNIBEN students through anonymity and messaging features, with Tinder and WhatsApp as key platforms. Economic hardship and loneliness are the primary motivators, amplified by societal and peer pressures, but the resulting mental health challenges, academic declines, and social stigma underscore the urgent need for interventions to support students' well-being in Nigeria's socio-economic context.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed to address the influence of social media on hookup culture and its consequences among UNIBEN students:

1. **University Awareness Campaigns:** UNIBEN's counseling unit should organize workshops to educate students about the risks of hookup culture, focusing on mental health and academic impacts. These should highlight safer social media use, addressing anonymity and messaging features.
2. **Financial Support Programs:** Given the high influence of financial incentives and economic hardship, UNIBEN should expand scholarship and work-study programs to reduce economic pressures driving hookups.
3. **Peer Mentorship Initiatives:** UNIBEN should establish peer mentorship programs encouraging positive social networks, leveraging Diffusion of Innovation's social system effects.
4. **Social Media Literacy Training:** The university should integrate social media literacy into the curriculum, teaching students to critically evaluate hookup-related content to mitigate Cultivation Theory's normalization effects.

5. **Counseling and Mental Health Support:** UNIBEN should strengthen counseling services to address mental health challenges and self-esteem issues offering support groups for students affected by hookup culture.

6. **Policy on Platform Usage:** UNIBEN should collaborate with student unions to promote responsible use of platforms like Tinder and WhatsApp, addressing their role in hookup networking.

7. **Further Research:** Future studies should explore gender differences in hookup motivations and consequences, using inferential statistics to deepen insights, as neutral responses suggest varied perceptions.

These recommendations aim to mitigate the negative impacts of hookup culture while addressing its economic and social drivers, fostering a healthier academic environment at UNIBEN.