

An Evaluation of the Causes and Effects of Smoking among Muslim Youths in Keffi Local Government Area, Nasarawa State, Nigeria: Islamic Perspective

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Abstract

The paper tries to assess the effects of Smoking among smokers in Keffi Local Government Area of Nasarawa State, Nigeria using Islamic perspective. The objectives are to identify the perception, extent of consumption and effects of smoking among smokers in Keffi LGA, Nasarawa State, Nigeria. The paper adopted survey method of research and surveillance technique was used for sample size determination. Structured questionnaire was distributed to 61 sampled respondents across Keffi Local Government Area and descriptive statistics was used for data analysis. The research found wide spread negative perception about smoking among the people of Keffi and concluded that smoking has had profound negative effects on both the individual smokers, the family (especially the children and women) as well as the environment. The paper recommends that all other sources of law should emulate the Islamic concept of total abstinence from all harmful materials.

Keywords- Smoking, Smokers, Narcotics, Tobacco, Muslim Youth, Islamic ruling.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Smoking by definition, refers to the action of lighting a cigarette, a pipe, a cigar, a water pipe, or any other object made from tobacco or materials of similar effects. The object is then sucked on with the lips to extract smoke. This smoke is inhaled into the chest and then exhaled from the nose and mouth as a thick white smoke. "Smoking" is now used to refer to the action of producing this smoke in English, Arabic, and other languages (Al-Jibaly, 1999).

Muhammad al-Jibaly noted that Tobacco was discovered by the Spanish sailors on the American shores at about 1500 CE (900 AH). Since its discovery, the epidemic of smoking has continued to spread all over the world. As early as the 17th Century, the European countries realized the dangers of smoking and fought against it and violators were punished. Many countries continue their attempts to protect their peoples from the harms of smoking. They employ media means, prescribed laws and regulations, and apply other methods to discourage people from smoking. Because of that, the rate of smokers has declined to a certain degree in some places (Al-Jibaly, 1999).

In the same vein, Smoking was introduced to the Muslim countries by the Europeans around 1000 AH. Its spread among the Muslims was similar to that in the West. The unfortunate fact, however, is that in the Muslim countries, no similar measures were exerted to protect the people from it. To the contrary, the media continues to advertise smoking and encourage people to do it. This caused the epidemic of smoking to continue to spread in those countries to such an extent that it has become hard to control.

In the past, smoking was viewed as permissible by many Muslim scholars. This is because it was not an intoxicant and only resulted in bad breath, which did not go against any basic Islamic tenet. However, following mounting evidence on the dangers of smoking, more Muslim scholars have issued edicts that consider smoking as prohibited in Islam. This is because Shari'ah principle views preservation of life as being mandatory and any act to directly or indirectly harm life will have to be considered as prohibited (Radwan, 2003).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Some Muslim youths in Keffi Municipal tends to see smoking as one who is tough, bold and strong. Some youngsters have been known to use cigarette at the instance of peers, elders or siblings. Youths who usually feel inadequate have been known to use cigarette to achieve social acceptance. It is as result of this abuse that Youths in Keffi Municipal develops series of physical complications, social and emotional problems. It is observed that many Youths have developed mental retardation, hypertension and other abnormalities which lead to increase in committing crimes. Some of them developed kidney problem and some died consciously or unconsciously due to smoking.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

Religion plays a part in health beliefs and behaviour such as smoking and could well be used as a public

health intervention to reduce tobacco use in the community. Several studies have reported on the use of religious settings, religious professionals and/or faith based intervention to promote a reduction in many social vices including smoking (Schorling 1997). The results of this survey could be used as a guide in formulating local religion-based tobacco control interventions.

The purpose of this study is to find out the extent of involvement of Muslim youths in Keffi Municipal in smoking and the perception of Muslim youths in connection to smoking and to determine whether Muslim youths in Keffi have any awareness of the opinions of Muslim scholars regarding smoking in Islam.

1.4 Research Questions

The following questions were formulated to guide the investigation.

- i. What percentages of Muslim youths male and female respectively in Keffi Municipal are involved in smoking?
- ii. What are the possible causes and effects of smoking among Muslim youths in Keffi Municipal?
- iii. Which age range is mostly involved in smoking?

1.5 Sampling Technique

Stratified and random sampling techniques were used in the study. Keffi Municipal is made up six districts which are- *Madaki, Magajin-Gari, Pakaci, Wambai, Sabon-Gari* and *Dallatu* districts. Sixty-one (61) Muslim youths in Keffi Municipal to were asked to respond to the research questionnaire.

1.6 Methodology of the Study

The methodology used for data collection was a questionnaire, the instrument was developed based on a 5-point likert rating scale ranging from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*. Respondents were requested to indicate the extent of their agreement or disagreement with the items. The instrument was validated by test experts, its reliability was determined to be 7.3

1.7 Data Presentation and Analysis

1.7.1 Estimation of the “Death Rate” of the Distributed Questionnaires

In total, 61 questionnaires were distributed to the sampled respondents from the six districts in Keffi LGA in order to gather information for the evaluation of each research questions and the outcome was presented below:

Table 1: “Death Rate” of the Distributed Questionnaires

Variable	Distributed	Returned and Completed	Returned but Incomplete	“Death Rate”
Keffi	61	50	11	18.03%
Total	61	50	11	18.03%

Source: Estimated from the Stock of Questionnaires Distributed and Returned

From the questionnaires distributed within Keffi Municipal, the “death rates” estimated were 18.03% which is (11) implying the percentage of questionnaires not useful for the analysis of the study. The methodology of wait-and-fill-and-get adopted was responsible for zero no return of questionnaires.

The data collected were analyzed using simple percentage and mean.

Table 2.

Number of Male & Female Muslim youths in Keffi Municipal involved in smoking	No.	%
	50	81.96%
No of male involved in smoking	37	74%
No of female involved in smoking	13	26%

Source: Estimated from the Stock of Questionnaires Distributed and Returned

An inspection of Table 2 reveals that out of the 61 respondents 50 i.e. 81.96% of them have been involved in smoking at one time or the other. Out of the 50 respondent in Table 2, 37 of them representing 74% are males while 13 of them representing 26% are females.

Table 3- Mean of respondents on the causes of smoking among Muslim youths in Keffi Municipal.

S/N	Causes of Smoking	Mean	Remarks
1.	Influence of peers	18.48	Insignificance
2.	Influence of neighbours	2.80	insignificance
3.	Influence of environment	11.88	significance
4.	Curiosity	15.84	significance
5.	Prevention of failure	2.04	Insignificance
6.	Gives satisfaction	21.12	significance
7.	Misinformation by peers	11.24	significance
8.	Parental influence	2.72	Insignificance
9.	The mass media	1.52	Insignificance
10.	Ignorance of its consequences	18.92	significance
11.	Availability of Cigarette	17.60	significance
12.	Reduction of emotional and psychological stress	19.36	significance
13.	Influence of boy friends	2.16	Insignificance
14.	Influence of girl friends	1.96	Insignificance
15.	Influence of labour mates	11.88	significance
16.	Desire to be recognized	10.80	significance
17.	Pleasant at first trial	19.80	significance
18.	Afraid of losing trial	16.72	significance
19	Gives confidence	17.16	significance
20	Forget problems	18.92	significance
21	Control Temper	20.24	significance
22	Avoid sleeping	2.48	Insignificance

Source: Estimated from the Stock of Questionnaires Distributed and Returned

Table 3 shows 22 items that could be the causes of Muslim youths involvement in smoking in Keffi Municipal. Fifteen items out of the twenty two were accepted as causes of smoking among the Muslim youths in Keffi Municipal with influence of peers, controlling temper, reduction of emotional and psychological stress, availability of the commodity, emotional and psychological stress, gives satisfaction and pleasant at first trial having the highest mean.

Table 4 Mean of respondents on the effects of smoking among Muslim youths in Keffi Municipal.

S/NO	Effects of Smoking	Mean	Remarks
1	Smoking as an evil to the religion	1.50	insignificance
2	Smoking as harm to human body	4.55	significance
3	Smoking weakens the mind, reasoning and the will power	4.48	significance
4	Smoking as economic and financial waste	5.46	significance
5	Smoking affects morality	1.54	insignificance
6	Smoking as a vice and evil behaviour	1.64	insignificance
7	Smoking affects the society	5.18	significance

Source: Estimated from the Stock of Questionnaires Distributed and Returned

Table 4 shows 7 items that could be the effects of Muslim youths involvement in smoking in Keffi Municipal. Four items out of the seven were accepted as effects of smoking among the Muslim youths in Keffi Municipal with smoking as harm to human body, its effects on the society, smoking as economic and financial wasted and as a means of weakening the mind and reasoning having the highest mean.

Table 5 Number of Muslim youths in Keffi Municipal involved in smoking according to age.

Age	No	%
16-20 years	13	26%
21-25 years	26	52%
26- above years	11	22%
Total	50	100%

Source: Estimated from the Stock of Questionnaires Distributed and Returned

Table 5- Shows the number and percentage of Muslim youths in Keffi Municipal involved in smoking according to age. Out of the 50 Muslim youths in Keffi Municipal that have been involved in smoking, 26 (52%) of them were within the age range of 21-25 years, while those within the range of 16-20 years comprises 13 (26%) The least

involved age range group was within the age range of 26 and above years with 11 (22%).

1.8

Summary and Discussion

The study revealed that significant number of Muslim youths in Keffi Municipal (52%) has been involved in smoking at one time or the other. This discovery should be a matter of concern to all stakeholders as youths are supposed to be the future leaders. The implication of this to national development cannot be over emphasized. To have this number of youths involved in smoking is disturbing considering the roles they are to play in national development. From the study, sex seems to be a barrier to smoking. Out of the 50 Muslim youths involved in smoking, 37 (74%) of them were male and 13 (26%) were female. The reason for the Muslim youths in Keffi Municipal involvement in smoking include influence of peers, classmates, neighbours, friends, curiosity, reducing emotional and psychological stress, pleasant at first trial, to have confidence as well as to work hard and the desire to be recognized. In addition, the effects of smoking among Muslim youths in Keffi Municipal has also been identified through the study to includes it harm to the religion, smoking as economic/financial waste, it harm to human body both physically, mentally and spiritually, it effects to the society and smoking as an evil that weakens the mind, reasoning and will power. More so, the study has identified that it is always very difficult to withdraw from the vice ones a victim has become addicted to it.

Furthermore, smoking among the Muslim youths in Keffi Municipal involved all the age groups. Muslim youths in Keffi Municipal between the age range of 16-20 years had 26% while 26 and above years had 22%, while those within the range of 21-25 had 52%. This shows that age is not a serious barrier to smoking. All age groups within the Muslim youths in Keffi Municipal are prone to smoking hence the need for a quick intervention by both government and the stake holders.

1.9 Islamic position on Smoking

There are many sufficient reasons Islamically, to rule smoking prohibited. Most significantly, it is harmful in numerous ways. It is harmful to the religion, health, environment, family, brotherhood and social relations, property, etc. Smoking spoils a person's acts of worship and reduces their rewards. For instance, it harm the prayer, which is the pillar of Religion. Allah's Messenger said: "Whoever eats garlic or onion, let him avoid us and our mosque, and stay in his home. The angels are surely hurt by things that hurt the human beings" (Bukhari, Bk 1, Vol. 12, Had no. 814) Those with clean and undefiled nature have no doubt that the smell emanating from the mouth of a smoker is worse and more foul than that from the mouth of one who ate garlic or onion. Thus, a smoker is in between two options, either to harm the praying people and the angels with his foul smell, or miss the prayer in congregation.

Smoking also spoils fasting. Fasting is very hard for the smoker. As soon as the day is over, he hastens to break his fast on an evil cigarette instead of sweet dates or pure water. Even if he fasts through the month Ramadan, a smoker is reluctant to fast on other days. Thus he loses the great reward of those who fast even one day in Allah's way.

In addition, no one can deny the harm of smoking to the human body. The medical evidence for this is well established and overwhelming. Cigarette contains poisonous materials, such as nicotine, tar, carbon monoxide, arsenic, benzopyrene, etc., that the smoker swallows in small proportions. Their harm accumulates with time to result in a gradual killing of the human organs and tissues.

The hazards of smoking to the health are hard to enumerate. Cancer, tuberculosis, heart attacks, asthma, coughing, premature birth, infertility, infections in the digestive system, high blood pressure, nervousness, mouth and teeth diseases, etc., are among the many health hazards that have been strongly linked to smoking. These diseases may not appear all at once, however a smoker is most likely to suffer from some of them, and his suffering increases as he grows older. Furthermore, statistics have established that smokers' age is, on the average, ten years less than other people's (<http://uk.answers.yahoo.com/question/index>).

This is sufficient to prohibit smoking. Islam prohibits any action that causes harm to oneself or to other people. Allah says: "Do not kill yourselves; Allah is indeed merciful to you."(Q4:29) Another verse says: "Do not cast yourselves, with your own hands, into destruction." (Q2:195). And the Prophet (Muhammad SAW) said: "Whoever consumes poison, killing himself with it, then he will be consuming this poison in the hell-fire, and he will abide in it permanently and eternally (Bukhari, Bk 7, Vol. 71, Had. 670).

Smoking is harmful to the human mind and reason. An obvious demonstration of this is that one who is addicted to it passes through periods of severe craving, making it hard for him to think, concentrate, solve a problem, or do any important thing, until he smokes. In addition, when one smokes, his muscles slacken, and he passes through a brief period of delirium that curtains the thought. His digestive system is also affected, causing him frequent nervousness and trembling of the hands. He passes through periods of excitability, in irritation, and insomnia.

A smoker emits his poisons in the faces of his companions, wife, children, and the environment. It is well established that second-hand smoke is almost as dangerous as first-hand (U.S. Department of Health and Human

Services). Thus, whether they like it or not, a smoker's associates are forced to inhale the smoke and be themselves smokers as well. A smoker wastes his wealth on that which harms and has no benefit; he will be asked about his wealth and how he spent it, Allah says: "And do not waste (your resources) extravagantly. Indeed the squanderers are the brethren of the devils" (Q 17:26-27). And the Prophet (SAW) said:

Allah is pleased with three things from you, and He is angry with three things from you. He is pleased that you worship Him and do not associate anything with Him, and that you take hold of the rope of Allah altogether, and that you give good counsel to the one to whom Allah gives command over you. He is angry with you for gossip, *squandering property*, and asking too many questions (Malik, Bk 56, Had no. 56.8.20).

Furthermore, there are numerous cases of burnt carpets, furniture, and even complete houses and establishments that have resulted from this disastrous vice (smoking). A smoker despises himself, because he feels that a little cigarette is controlling him. Realizing his weakness before desires, this creates in him a feeling of defeat in the face of hardships.

1.10 How to stop Smoking Islamically

The following are some suggestions to help a person stop smoking:

1. Rely on Allah (SWT) sincerely, with full determination not to return to smoking, in compliance with Allah's command: "When you decide on a certain course of action, place your trust in Allah."(Q 3:59)
2. Stop immediately instead of claiming it is best to do it gradually. The gradual approach is the way of one who does not trust his determination and the will power that Allah (SWT) has granted him. Let the example be taken from companions of the Prophet (SAW) who, as soon as Allah's command reached them regarding alcohols: "Will you not then desist?" (Q5: 91) They immediately poured out all the alcohol that they had and said, "We desist our Lord, we desist!" They did this despite the fact that alcohol has a greater addictive power over those who drink it than smoking.
3. Avoid the bad company of smokers and smoking environments that are full with the smell of smoke.
4. Change the food diet by abstaining from foods and drinks that would entice the craving to smoke such as spices, meat, tea, and coffee; and eating a lot of vegetables and fruits.
5. Use medically tested and established procedures to help stop smoking, as directed by physicians, such as nicotine patches, nicotine gum, etc.
6. Expel the secret whispers of Satan who continuously dictates to man that he is weak and incapable of refraining from sinning, as Allah (SWT) says "It is but Satan who instills (into you) fear of his allies; so do not fear them, but fear Me if you are (truly) believers. Fight then against the allies of Satan; indeed, Satan's guile is weak. "(Q 4:76).

1.11 Conclusion

It is clear from the findings that Muslim youths in Keffi Municipal are to some extent involved in smoking. This is seen as a serious problem since the youths are the future leaders. Parents, teachers, leaders both religious and political are anticipated to exhibit good example for the youth to emulate. In this, it will definitely have far reaching effects on the children placed under their control and supervision. This situation calls for serious actions that will curb the menace of smoking in the Nigerian Society in general and Keffi Municipal in particular.

1.12 Recommendations

To curb this social ill, the paper recommends the following:

- Government should ban the advertisement of all smoking items such as tobacco, cigarettes etc. on all the private and national media.
- Government should encourage adverts on negative effects of smoking in all the private and national media;
- Functional religious counseling units with personnel should be introduced in the Keffi Municipal.
- Government and other agents of socialization should mount up awareness campaigns through preaching sessions, seminars, conferences and workshops sensitizing the people on the evils of smoking;
- Members of the community should be educated on the negative effects of smoking through bill boards and prohibits the sale of these smoking materials in and around Keffi.
- Parents should be encouraged to give their children good parental care and pray for their guidance and protection.

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