



## Teofilo Kisanji University

### TEKU Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies (TJIS)

<https://www.teku.ac.tz/tjis.php>

**ORIGINAL ARTICLE**

**Received:** 15<sup>th</sup> January 2021

**Revised:** 16<sup>th</sup> May 2021

**Accepted:** 25<sup>th</sup> May 2021

**Published:** 25<sup>th</sup> June 2021

**Available at**  
[www.teku.ac.tz/](http://www.teku.ac.tz/)

## Backsliding From the Worship of God as a Problem Among University Students in Tanzania: A Case Study of the Chaplaincy of Teofilo Kisanji University in Mbeya

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### Abstract

One important aspect in human beings is the ability to make decision in the midst of choices. Human beings are surrounded by good and evil, right and wrong. The way human beings select what to act and not act matters greatly. There are times when human beings prefer and will to do good actions, yet act contrary to their noble wills. There are times when human beings will to do evil, yet do contrary to their wills. Human freewill and human action are great determinants of human nature, which poses a challenge when it comes to the divine mandate to do well. This article examines the concept of Christian backsliding in Christian worship services among university students in Tanzania. What causes most university students backslide from attending worship services and morning devotions? A qualitative study was conducted at Teofilo Kisanji University to ascertain the possible reasons for their backsliding. It uses Plato's and Aristotle's theory of *akrasia* as its guiding perspective and qualitative interviewing as its method for gathering research data. Research results indicate that there are a variety of reasons that cause students backslide from worship services, all based on human *akratic* (weak-willed) state. The article suggests that serious and intentional placement of psychologists in universities is necessary to mitigated students unstable decisions caused by their *akratic* (weak-willed) consciences leading to weak-willed actions in various situations apart from backsliding in church worship services.

**Keywords:** Backsliding; Church worship service; Akrasia; Akratic (weak-willed) action; Research participant; Teofilo Kisanji University

### 1. Introduction

Teofilo Kisanji University (TEKU) is among the largest and famous Universities in Mbeya. It is owned by The Moravian Church in Tanzania. There are many students who study in this University coming from different regions. Apart from conducive environment and moral life insisted by the University, there are different religious groups such as the University Students' Christian Fellowship (USCF), the Christ Ambassadors' Students Fellowship Tanzania (CASFETA), the Tanzania Youth Catholic Students (TYCS), etc. Students joining the University become involved in those groups having access to free worshipping. However, by considering a simple visitation paid by researchers to some students and observations made at TEKU, looking how life goes on, and the way students behave, it was realized that backsliding in the worship of God is a serious problem facing University Students, mainly those living within TEKU campus.

Before proceeding to what the article intends to discuss, it is important to define the key term of the topic—backsliding. In theological point of view, backsliding is a situation occurring when people break their own relationship with God and pursue their own desires. Jones (1999) admits

that backsliding has to do with one's status as a Christian and the expectations of his or her relationship with God. According to Jones, doing sin and turning against God is backsliding in theological point of view. It is a lapse from commitment to God and the baptismal vows that can lead one to going to hell. According to Nyagwoka (2016) backsliding is breaking God's prior covenant and turning to other relationships other than God. In the Old Testament, the backslider was returned to God through the blood of an animal. But in the New Testament, it is through faith in Jesus and his atoning sacrifice. Generally, in the Christian context, backsliding is not a new and instantly occurring thing; it is a serious problem that faced even people who lived in earlier periods of Christianity through whom we believed; though the extent of its occurring during the earliest period of time and nowadays may differ because of the dynamic nature of the World. For example, in Malachi 3:7 (RSV), the Bible admits that "From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my statutes (...)." This text indicates that backsliding from belief and worship of God is ancient and still goes on.

Regarding what has been introduced above, it is our thesis that backsliding in the worship of God among students at TEKU is caused by weak-willed state of humanity. Being

caused by the weakness of human will, backsliding is a very difficult issue to prevent from happening to University students, especially those at TEKU, due to the nature of their humanity. In order to defend this opinion/standpoint and show the difficulty that exists, we are going to discuss the following issues: age challenges, bad peer pressures, lack of fear of God, globalization, students' backgrounds, psychological problems, absence of individual's trust in God, lack of seriousness in serving and acknowledging God, anxieties and lack of self-understanding (knowing oneself) as themes from the data collected at Teofilo Kisanji University.

Some researchers have also researched to ascertain the causes for backsliding, such as Nyagwoka (2016), Heward-Mills (2008), Vance (2007), Russell (1990) and Ongon'ga & Akaranga (2013). However, most of such researchers concentrated on issues of economic factors, social and cultural requisites, commercialization of religion, individual spiritual decline, lack of reliable fellowships with other members of churches, poor sermons and liturgies during church services, and despises among Christians (some feeling to be holier than others). None of such studies touched the issue of individual freewill and the way it is influenced by such factors, a thing that this study focused. The following two sections first discuss the theoretical and methodological perspectives before presenting and discussing the themes from the analysis of the collected data.

## 2. Theoretical Perspective: Theory of *Akrasia*

This study is guided by Plato's and Aristotle's theory of *akrasia*. According to Funke (2014:64), "Akrasia is a Greek word meaning incontinence, or the inability to control one's excretions. It also has a broader connotation of a lack in self-control. Traditionally, *akrasia* was translated as weakness of will." (cf. Khazaei, 2018; May & Holton, 2010) *Akrasia* is differentiated from *enkrateia*. According to Mele (2010:392), "Enkrateia (continence, self-control, strength of will) is, again roughly, a trait of character exhibited in behavior that conforms with one's best or better judgment in the face of temptation to act to the contrary. The *akratic* person, Aristotle writes, 'is in such a state as to be defeated even by those [pleasures] which most people master,' while the self-controlled person is in such a state as 'to master even those by which most people are defeated'"

The theory of *akrasia* is clearly articulated in their works: Plato's *Protagoras* which was written ca 380 B.C and Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, mostly Book 7 written ca 350 B.C. These two works inform the major philosophical positions of the two philosophers. In *Protagoras*, Plato rejects the possibility for *akratic* actions, while in *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle defends the possibility for *akratic* actions in human life. On the one hand, Plato rejects the existence of *akratic* actions on the basis of Socratic point of view that there is no person who can subject oneself to doing what is wrong while knowing that that action is ethically wrong. Socrates conceived: "Then, I said, no man voluntarily pursues evil, or that which he thinks to be evil. To prefer evil to good is not in human nature; and when a man is compelled to choose one of two evils, no one will choose the greater when he may have the less". (see *Protagoras*, 358–359; cf. Davidson, 93–113; Hare, 1963:78–79).

Plato, following Socrates' intellectualism, insists that what are considered *akratic* actions are ethically wrong doings against what was rightly supposed to be done. Hence,

according to Plato, an *akratic* agent is a person who is ignorant about ethical issues and does wrong things out of ignorance or insanity, which is a typical character of flaw of the agent's ability to articulate. It is a typical character of wrongness in human conduct. Funke (2014:62) calls this type of *akrasia* as "Drunken *akrasia*" that principally listens to reason, but mishears it. According to him,

Drunken *akrasia* is the sort of weakness that occurs when one is incapacitated or overcome in the way that occurs when drunk. Instances of drunken *akrasia* do not require that an individual is literally drunk. Rather, drunkenness is a metaphor for a motivational element distinct from one's judgment which leads to action through an independent process. The drunken *akratic* has some judgment about what would be best to do but is led away from that course of action by a process which subverts the agent's judgment. It is not that the agent has conflicting judgments, or that her judgment shifts, rather on this model something overwhelms or subverts her judgment. (cf. Pears, 1984)

The biblical examples of "drunken-*akrasia*" are many: Adam's obedience of Eve's suggestion to eat a fruit forbidden by God, Samson's obedience to the seduction of Delilah to reveal the secret of his mighty power, and Abraham's obedience to Sarah's proposition for him to sleep with his maid servant Hagar.

On the other hand, Aristotle diverges from Socratic intellectualism. According to Aristotle, the *akratic* action is not done out of ignorance or insanity or a result of one's incapacitation; rather, it is done out of clear knowledge of the underlying ethics of an action but is forced to appeal to a pressure that requires the agent to act against his or her conscience and understanding. This way of acting is what it means by the weakness of the will (or *akrasia*), as opposed to the strength of the will (*enkrateia*). In Aristotle's line of thinking, an *akratic* agent is willing, ethically compelled and has knowledge on what he or she does or not does against what is considered as the right action. For example, students may clearly know that going to church for morning devotion or on Sunday worship services are good things and ethically obligatory to them, and are willing to do so; yet they knowingly and willingly decide not to attend and opt doing other things instead. In such actions against their will and knowledge, students are considered to be weak-willed agents. Students have a weak-will which Funke (2014:62) calls "clear-eyed *akrasia*" whereby the "clear-eyed *akratic* recognizes the wrongness of her action at the time she acts. There is no confusion or ignorance at play for the clear-eyed *akratic*. Rather, her weakness of will is a matter of her own judgment about what it would be best to do not being sufficiently motivational." (cf Reilly, 1977)

Though Plato and Aristotle have different lines of thinking about *akratic* actions, both importantly treat *akrasia* as an ethical issue. In biblical perspective, the "clear-eyed" *akratic* action is alluded by Paul when he states: he knew what was right and was willing to do it, but was not inclined to doing it and did what was not intended (Romans 7:12–25) It is in line of Adam's, Abraham's, Samson's drunken *akratic* actions and Paul's allusions of clear-eyed *akratic* actions that

we have selected the classical Plato's and Aristotle's approaches to *akrasia* because they emphasize the ethical dimension as opposed to contemporary approaches that emphasize on prudential appraisal. We are convinced that backsliding from the worship of God through not attending church services and devotions among TEKU students are ethical clear-eyed and drunken *akratic* actions that require an ethical perspective to address them (cf. Pang-White, 2000).

### 3. Methodological Perspective

This study employed an interpretivist paradigm as its philosophy of research. Interpretivism, according to Corbetta (2003:21), deals with human sciences as opposed to the sciences of nature. While in the sciences of nature the researcher and researched are detached, in human sciences the researcher and the researched are attached with close interaction. Ontologically, interpretivism is constructionist; it focuses on the way people construct meanings from their lived experiences. Epistemologically, the data obtained from research are subjective and descriptive. There are many possibilities of correct responses to a single particular issue. Methodologically, this paradigm is interactionist in the sense that there is high interaction between the researcher and those being researched (Corbetta, 2003:24).

This study used qualitative approach to design, collect and analyze research information obtained. Data were collected among students living in University hostels at Teofilo Kisanji University between January and February in 2021. A sample of eight (8) participants (05 males and 03 females) was involved in the study. The actual sample was not determined beforehand; rather, it was determined by the saturation point of provided information (Seidman, 2006:55; Rubin & Rubin, 1995:72–73). After interviewing the above-number of research participants, the saturation point was reached; that is, research participants started providing similar information to questions asked and nothing new was provided to researchers.

The research design adapted was a qualitative phenomenological research design which focuses on exploring the experiences of research participants. The tool used was interpersonal structured interviews whereby each student was interviewed personally and in a secure space to ensure their right to privacy. Seidman (2006:50–51) states: "The purpose of an in-depth interview study is to understand the experience of those who are interviewed, not to predict or to control that experience." (cf. Rubin & Rubin, 1995) Hence, data collected through interviews in this study were in the form of descriptions of research participants' experiences in the phenomenon of backsliding in church worship services and the meaning they provided to issues surrounding this phenomenon.

Before the commencement of interview session for each informant, researchers related to each informant the main objectives of the research venture, their freedom to withdraw from research at any time during the sessions, some possible benefits and risks for their participation, and assured them of their confidentiality and anonymity of both the information they provide and their own identities respectively. Interviews were conducted after signing the consent form written in Swahili, the language they understood better (see Seidman, 2006:57–93; cf. Rubin & Rubin, 1995; Corbetta, 2003:233–283; Oliver, 2003:28–38). Research information was collected in Swahili, the language mostly used by students in normal

non-academic communications and in devotions and worship services. The collected research information were transcribed into English, organized and analyzed qualitatively to obtain themes which are the basis of interpretation and discussion done in the following sections.

## 4. Data Presentation and Discussion

### 4.1 Age Challenges

The first aspect that forces University students to jettison worship services and their relationship to God is their ages and the challenges accompanying them. Apart from good and joyful things, every age category has its own challenges. Childhood age challenges cannot be the same as those of youth age or old age, and vice versa. Most University students are in the youth age, though not all of them. When this study was done, most female students at TEKU had an age range of 23–26 years while male students had 26–36 years. Having an active mind set, most people of these age ranges face a lot of challenges such as being driven to engage in everything coming to their eyes, whether good or bad; for example, some of them engage in the use of drugs and sexual intercourse to earn money for their own standing. Wilkins (1972) says that people of this age become more and more aware that they cannot be forced to believe, and obey the law unless they want to do so. In addition, people of these ages are highly pulled by the Universe where they feel more enjoying than to God's matters.

On the question of which prompted research participants at TEKU to provide their opinions on whether age challenges is a contributing factor for them to backslide in the worship of God or not, large number of participants had a positive response. Most research participants responded with a "Yes" answer while only two research participants answered with a "No" answer and only one research participant answered with "I Don't Know" answer. A certain research participant responded by saying that he became more bored than enjoying when he attended to the Church for services because of unavailability of expertise in different style of singing and playing musical instruments. The findings obtained at TEKU show clearly that age challenges contributes in making students to backslide in the worship of God among students. Therefore, considering the above explanations we can conclude that age challenges may affect not only one's academic matters but also his/her relationship with God. The forces of youth hood are the possible causes for University students' backsliding in their attendance in worship services because of triggering their decision. What they want to do and see it as ethically good and obligatory is not what they do; rather, they do the opposite against their own wills.

### 4.2 Bad Peer-Pressure

The second aspect is the pressure of peer-groups at the University. Talking of peer-pressure, we refer to the influence which these groups may have to one's total life. Peer-pressure affects the life of students in Universities greatly. The way a certain student acts, thinks or behaves will highly depend on which kind of peer-pressure one has fallen to. The saying is true: "show me your friends I will tell your behaviour". There are so many categories of peer-pressure groups in Universities; for example, those dealing with religious matters, drugs abusers, alcohol drinkers, etc. Apart from availability of good peer-pressure groups, many students find

themselves falling into bad peer-pressure groups, whether they like or not. This embrace of bad peer-pressure groups explains why a student having a good and close relationship with God before joining the University totally changes and finds other ways of life, if not totally stopping to go to worship sessions and trusting in God. There are real examples on this issue. One of the authors of this article reported:

In the year 2020 I taught a certain Pastor's daughter at the Moravian Teachers' College named Y. She was a good and well-behaving girl not only in secular matters, but also in spiritual life. After being contacted by bad peer-pressure groups, her life started changing gradually, and then totally stopped even attending worship services. Moreover, when was studying at the University of Dodoma, I had a certain classmate with a good code of conduct and an active member of the Church. As time went on, her wearing style changed and started wearing indecent clothes, tight and transparent clothes. It is not easy to believe, that girl later came to be worse in behavior than all other students in the class.

The situation found at the University of Dodoma was not different from that found at TEKU. At TEKU, research participants were asked a question that required them to state whether the presence of bad peer-pressure was an aspect contributing much to students to lose direction and stop worshipping God or not. Almost all research participants told researchers the difference in socialization between the university campus and their home places where they came from. During interview, one research participant spoke saying *"Socialization at TEKU is higher compared to where we were before joining the university. The way we are now is not the same as we were before because the peer-groups have totally impacted on our lifestyles, even making us stop going for worship services and morning devotions. Sometimes we ask ourselves with fearing and regretting as to what will happen when our parents see or are informed that we have changed to this extent."* Another research participant said: *"TEKU is like a village, every kind of lifestyle is available. When one has self-understanding and focus living his/her own life, presence or absence of those bad peer pressure is not an issue."* Generally, the presence of bad peer-pressure groups at TEKU drives back students from worshipping God. The peer-pressure groups trigger students' wills to do what is good and do what is bad instead. Hence, the above examples indicate that peer-pressure is something important to consider when University students want to maintain their relationship with God at Teofilo Kisanji University and other universities worldwide.

#### 4.3 Lack of Fear of God

The third aspect reducing the morality for University students at TEKU leading them to not attending worship services is their lack of fear of God in their consciences. According to Yindo (2012:435) the fear of God has to do with the "basic norm that constitutes the normative mode of human existence." It has to do with the knowledge of God whose main content is piety and living in the desired Christian norms of conduct. The fear of God is like an engine to the Christian's life. It makes the Christian live a life of obedience and holiness before God. In 1Peter 1:16–17 (RSV), the scriptures insist saying: "(...) be holy, for I am holy." The fear of God is the only way to make a Christian escape from committing sin or any kind of evils. Most university students, especially those who are members of the Church, find themselves backsliding from attending worship services, either knowingly or unknowingly, being convinced by others

or by their own decision start engaging in committing evils in a similar way to when were not members of the church. For example, at some universities one can observe many young girls committing prostitution with people of older ages. To justify this point, one of the lecturers at TEKU was heard saying: "In the coming two weeks, I have an invitation at the Mzumbe University in Morogoro to present a paper on the causes and effects of committing prostitution as it has been a serious problem there." The words of this lecturer indicate that students' engagement in prostitution happens not from anywhere, but from lower or not having the fear of God in their consciences.

Absence of the fear of God is one of the central causative agents of backsliding in worship for many individual students at TEKU and probably other Universities in Tanzania. Research participants at TEKU were asked a question which prompted their opinions whether lack of the fear of God made one to backslide in the worship of God or not. Five research participants responded with an enthusiastic "Yes" answer, two with a "No" answer and there was only one who said he "Did not Know". However, one research participant narrated saying: *"The fear of God is the secret of one's holy life. Students commit evils openly, girls wear shaming clothes and others leave worshipping God openly; even those who attend Church for services go there for leisure and not with the expectation of meeting with God. All these are done because of lack of the fear of God."* If clearly examined, one can note that students' choices not to fear God and fear other things emerge from their weak-willed humanity. Thus, we are required to understand that the fear of God strengthens one's relationship with God; however, the lower it gets, the weaker the one's relationship with God becomes leading to backsliding.

#### 4.4 Globalization

The fourth aspect is globalization and its negative impacts to the youth, including most university students. Among the impacts of globalization in the universe is its promotion of the increase in interactions between different regions and populations. Students in universities are educated ones; they are the ones with great affection to the globalization and its underlying effects. With the advancement of technology, university students are able to communicate and socialize with different people around the world for different purposes. Kaare (2017) states that Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) enable individuals' economies to access knowledge, information and communication important for economic and social interaction. Apart from the positive effects of globalization, it is true that globalization has highly impacted university students negatively as most of them spend a lot of time perusing through internet looking for unnecessary issues such as bad pictures, X movies and luxury matters rather than spiritual and academic issues.

In contributing to a paper presented by Rev. Dr. Ronald Mbao about the impacts of globalization to the youth (presented at TEKU on 13 January 2021), one of the pastors teaching theology at TEKU, said: "Globalization has impacted negatively to us as Africans by changing our total ways of life; we are now living a copying and pasting life." Moreover, the pastor said: "Globalization has contributed much to the destruction of our moral values." The words of this lecturer show that through globalization, the weakness of will has succeeded to capture the mindsets of many Christian young

men and women making them spiritually blind in having right actions in relation to God's matters, but making them highly active and attractive to the world that sometimes weakens their own religious belief in God. During interview with research participants at TEKU, there was a question which probed one informant to answer whether she had a smartphone or not; and if she had, had it impacted positively to her relationship with God or not. The research participant responded: *"I preferred to use a smartphone because of its simplicity on showing the improvements of science and technology."* Moreover, a question was posed to almost all research participants involved in the research at TEKU inquiring whether they had smartphones and used them daily. Five research participants had a 'Yes' answer and three research participants provided a 'No' answer. A certain participant further reported: *"I, with my roommates, use our phones few times for searching academic matters, and a lot of time for socializing via WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and watching different Bongo Flavor Artists' performances."* In addition, two girls who were not part of research participants of this research work added to the question of using smartphones saying that they spent a lot of time in their phones looking for new dressing styles, fashions, lives of celebrities, etc. The responses of research participants above indicate how the weakness of will among students triggers them from beneficial use of smartphones towards bad uses. The findings came up with a conclusion that globalization has generally impacted negatively on the relationship with God of many university students. Therefore, for student believers, globalization leads them more to backsliding in faith rather than consolidating faith.

#### 4.5 Students' Backgrounds

The fifth aspect is the varied backgrounds of students acquired before joining university studies. University life is sometimes so surprising because one can feel like living in a certain world never lived before. Students are now free, as are coming from the life of being controlled by others and enter the life of self-control, from a life of which when done something wrong, parents or other members of the society ask and warn you to the life which no one asks or cares about you. This freedom is the possible reason why many students find themselves so confused. University life is a very short period of time; yet it is where one can either organize well and build or destroy the whole future life spiritually and physically.

In most cases, the strength and well-being of spiritual life of a student at the university is much reflected by his/her background, though to some of them one can realize their lives at the university being totally different from their backgrounds. As an example, one of the authors of this article narrates his experience: *"I joined the University of Dodoma with a certain girl whom we were from the same village. Her parents grew her up in a very good foundation of faith. Later the girl changed negatively after joining the university. The change of this girl indicates that some students were from families with the fear of God insisting greatly in God's matters such as going to church for services, worshiping and being well-taught in Christian ethics and morals."* This aspect is much supported by Kean (1961:112) who admits that "The Church is the Family of Families," and "The Family is the little Church within the Church." Here, Kean's words cement on the fact that though facing a lot of challenges at the university, most of these students were good spiritually, strong and tolerant in faith before joining the university.

Those who come from non-Christian families/faithless families' and with poor spiritual foundations are found to be easily backsliding when joining the University due to poor foundation in their backgrounds. In Psalms 11:3 (RSV), David warns saying: "If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?" It is clear here that students' backgrounds play significant roles in their spiritual well-being while in universities.

At TEKU, research participants were asked a question which required them to state their opinions on whether they attended worship sessions at homes before joining the university or not. Few research participants responded with a 'Yes' answer and that they were doing so by being insisted by their parents; two research participants answered the question with an emphatic 'No' answer indicating that despite their parents' emphasis to attend worship services, they hardly obeyed. This part also had another question which required research participants' comments on the frequency of church services attendance before and after joining the university. Three research participants answered that it depended on situation because for them thirsty of searching God was higher than when they were at homes, while four research participants said their attendance to church for services was lower compared to when they were at homes because no one insisted them to do so at the university. These responses show the effect of students' wills in deciding a course of action: weak-willed students turned against what they ought to act while strong-willed ones emphasized on what they knew and were willing to do.

In addition, during the interview session, one of the great leaders at TEKU Chapel commented: "The students' attendance for worship sessions is generally not satisfying; not only for the secular students, but also for theology students. This unsatisfactory attendance is likely because many students think that attending there for worship services at the chapel is not obligatory." Furthermore, the leader said: "I, as one among pastors at the University Chapel and one of the members of the Department of Theology, declare that we have been loose somewhere, especially on insisting the obligation of attending chapel worship sessions to students immediately after their arrival at the university." The pressing question regarding this leader's comment is whether insistence in the obligations to attend worship services soon after students' arrival may trigger their effective use of freewill. The findings from research show clearly that the frequency of students' attendance in worshiping sessions at the University is lower compared to when they were at homes despite university pastors' emphasis and warning upon students. Therefore, having a flourishing faith among students at the University depends greatly on one's background and the nature of will, weak or strong, which the student has. Regular attendance in worship services and hearing the word of God being preached in church is one of the major sources of consolidating outstanding faith among students.

#### 4.6 Psychological Problems

The sixth point concerns students' good or bad psychological well-being. Psychological problems are among the many serious issues affecting students at the university. One can term psychological problems as a war fought in the mind of the student. Seriousness of these problems is reflected on their effects to the student physically or spiritually. The problems greatly facing University students are such as feeling loneliness, sexual relationship, lack of

money and academic under performance. In his book, Kean (1961:48) clarifies loneliness as being an aspect that the individual faces depravity in relationship with both God and fellow human beings. Fellow human beings reduce intimacy and care while God distances the human being spiritually. The distance between God and humanity leads human beings into questioning the existence and role of God in their lives. Loneliness caused by fellow human beings and God cause lonely people to see that there is no meaning in their lives (cf. De Jong Gierveld, Tilburg & Dykstra, 2006:485–486). Hence, Kean's ideas indicate that in times of problems, especially psychological ones, people doubt the role of God and backslide from worship.

One of the authors attests his experience saying *“Through studying the lives of students here at TEKU and when was at the university of Dodoma, I realized that many students live in pairs forming unofficial marriages. In other words we call it boyfriend and girlfriend relationships.”* According to this attestation, these kinds of relationships are in contrast to Kean (1961:48) who says: *“The clergyman is the official witness who performs his religious task by dedicating these vows with prayer and blessing.”* When this kind of relationships come to unexpected termination, many weak-willed students become confused and do wrong expectations contrary to own wills as a means of being released. For example, because of being abandoned by his girlfriend, in 2013, one third year student at the University of Dodoma hanged himself in his room. Another case occurred in 2015 when a student went to the apartment to kill himself because of his partner's infidelity in relationship.

Another psychological problem to university students is when student lacks money to run his/her own life while seeing other students enjoy and do whatever they wish. In addition, the student may be psychologically affected by underperformance in academic matters. It should be born in mind that all these situations make the student to prove failure in achieving his/her expected plans and goals; hence being totally disheartened and no longer believes that God is with him or her. The weak-willed student finds oneself having no thirsty searching for God or even going to church for services rather than being pulled away from God's presence. This situation was clearer in the research at TEKU. Research participants at TEKU were required to state whether they had ever been in relationships (living as boy and girlfriends) and suddenly broken; how did they feel, and whether were affected in one way or another in their relationships with God. Three research participants among them responded with an affirmative *“Yes”* answer; they said that that was a painful moment in such a way that even the thirsty of going to church for services was no more. Two research participants responded that they faced that challenge but continued worshipping God. Three research participants came up with an affirmative *“NO”* answer meaning that they peacefully decided to break their relationships.

It should be known that there are so many psychological problems facing university students; thus, in dealing with the above problem, it was just a matter of choice according to the real lives of many students at the university. The findings at TEKU show clearly that the unfortunate breaking of non-official relationships leads more to negative than positive effects, especially in students' relationships with God. Therefore, basing on the above discussion, one can see the way psychological problems affect weak-willed students physically and spiritually. The psychological effects to the

actions of weak-willed students cement on the requirement to have experts in psychology around university compounds to help students facing these and similar kinds of problems.

#### 4.7 Lack of Individual's Trust in God

The seventh aspect pertains to students' own having no trust in God. It is very difficult to depend on an issue one is not sure if it will provide good results. Many people leave God not because they do not love God and fear God, but because of not believing that God will be helpful in their matters. When reaching to high level of education (University level), authors of this article have seen many students succumbing to Pelagian heretical points of view, to be being not dependents on God and being self-independents thinking to be at a level of being able to do everything without God's help, something which is certainly wrong. In Psalms 37:3–7 (RSV) and Psalms 127:1 (RSV), David admonishes saying: *“Trust in the Lord, and do good; so you will dwell in the land, and enjoy security.”* And further David emphasizes: *“Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain (...).”* Hence, Teikmanis (1964:61) also cements: *“God is with us always. He [sic] hears our prayers and is more willing to give us strength to overcome than we are to pray. We only need to pray in an affirmative way and remember His promise.”*

The research participants at TEKU were required to provide their opinions whether absence of individual's trust to God decreased the strength of the relationship with God or not. Almost six research participants responded with an affirmative *“Yes”* answer excluding two who responded with a *‘No’* answer. Moreover, a certain Pastor who teaches theology responded to the question saying that absence of trust in God reduced thirsty and effort of an individual for searching God, hence leading to poor relationship with God. Thus, according to these research participants, when an individual loses trust towards his/her God, and not believes that God is the doer of everything, there can be a backsliding in worship and adoration to God; a weak-willed student turns aside what is good and follows his/her own bad ways.

#### 4.8 Lack of Seriousness in Serving and Acknowledging God

The eighth aspect is lack of students' seriousness to serve and acknowledge God. An important thing to understand is that human beings are created in such a way that each one is a helper of the other person. Believing is a sign of calling; so one has to accomplish hard what is in that calling. Teikmanis (1968:25) asserts: *“We are called to render service to our people at the point of their growing edge.”* Teikmanis' words imply that absence of seriousness in serving God can cause a student to backslide, especially when faced by difficult issues. Some university students backslide in worshipping and serving God because of feeling ashamed. For example, at TEKU, one student, not a research participant, was heard saying thus after hearing a person proclaims the Word of God: *“Ah! To serve God is an outdated thing; and when one does it, it is because of failure in life and having nothing important to do.”* What does this statement mean regarding service to God? The research participants at TEKU were required to state their opinions on whether they knew and fulfilled their responsibilities as Christians or not. Four research participants responded that they knew their responsibilities but not fulfilled them as they ought, while two research participants responded that they did not know their responsibilities at all. Two of those research participants answered that they knew and fulfilled their responsibilities

because they always attended worship sessions and participated in most church affairs.

Moreover, to show that lack of seriousness in serving God was a serious problem among university students at TEKU, two young male Christian students (research participants) were contacted and interviewed whether they had Bibles and read them effectively to gain spiritual insights for their Christian lives. These men owned expensive smartphones; but surprisingly, they had no Bibles! The findings from interviews concluded that most students hardly fulfilled their responsibilities as Christians either by not knowing them clearly hence being fruitful, or by putting forward their own priorities contrary to their obligations to God's priorities. Therefore, God's servants to University students are advised to focus on trusting and being serious in serving God in whatever situation they encounter as the Bible in Mathew 10:32–33 (RSV) admonishes saying: "So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven; but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven." Moreover, in Romans 12:11 (RSV), Paul states that "Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit, serve the Lord." Servants of students at Universities are admonished to rend their services despite discouragements from backsliding students.

#### 4.9 Anxieties

The ninth issue is the effects of anxiety to ambitious students. Anxiety is a very serious problem in Christianity as is anchored on faithlessness. Many university students become worried about their own matters such as being successful in their academic issues, income when are at the university, their future after university studies, appearance before other people, etc. Such students use most of the time in their own issues rather than in God's issues. One research participant was asked: "Why do you always not attend worship session? The participant responded: "*Ah! I cannot do so because to do so is a wasting of time.*" Due to anxiety, this student was hardly worried about God, but worried about his own businesses. The response of this student indicates that anxiety triggers the wills and courses of actions of students against doing what is good. In his book (1964:63), Teikmanis admits similar sentiments: "We worry about our children, health, reputation, job, income, age, looks, appearance, and a multitude of other things because we lack faith that God is, that He cares, that He will supply our needs in the time of crisis."

In order to prove the effects of anxiety to students' attendance in worship services at TEKU, research participants were further asked to state whether the university academic matters and those extracurricular activities affected their attendance in worshipping sessions or not. Almost all research participants confessed of not being affected greatly; that only sometimes they found themselves having a lot of individual's and group's assignments and weekends were found to be good for them to accomplish those works instead of attending worship sessions. Research participants further asserted that sometimes some lecturers came to teach them on Sundays hence attending to church for services being ignored to many of them. Therefore, according to the findings, students' attendance in worship sessions was to a greater extent affected by students' anxiety when they found to have a lot of works to do to meet the pressures of deadlines and when were required to be taught even on Sunday days. Therefore, anxieties caused by heavy assignments and pressures of

deadlines and lecturers' teaching on Sundays provided an influence to students decisions leading them to backsliding or departing completely from God due to worries of proving failure in academic issues.

#### 4.10 Lack of Self-Understanding (Who am I?)

The tenth issue pertains to students' awareness of themselves in relation to other students in their Universities. When a student lacks self-understanding, it is dangerous to his/her life, both physically and spiritually. Self-understanding is the basic issue because it concerns about the life of an individual student's rise and fall. Within this issue, there are individual responsibilities; that is why it is a very difficult and painful issue. The issue of self-awareness has some correlation to what Thornton (1967:26) says: "For many of us pastoral theology was born in the painful question: Who am I as a minister? It continues to take form in the question: Who is God in relation to human existence?" Thornton's question directs students to being self-aware, an important issue in one's service and worship of God. Failure to be aware of oneself, a student can hardly understand who he/she is, why he/she has been created and placed in the universe? Why is he/she at the university, and doing what? Why did God put him/her there and not somewhere else? What are the plans and strategies for achieving his/her goals? Lack of self-understanding can be a powerful reason why many students find themselves living a foolish, unethical and unexpected life at universities, a life of copying and pasting from their fellows. Self-understanding provides one with self-confidence, seriousness and knowledge on what he/she does, being focused on his/her issues, and being firm on what he/she believes.

When research participants at TEKU were provided with the question requiring them to state whether the lack of self-understanding led them to backsliding in attending worship services or not, they had an affirmative 'Yes' answer, excluding two research participants who answered that 'they did not know'. According to these findings, it is plausible that when one lacks self-understanding, it becomes easier to backslide in attending worship services or having poor relationship with God. Therefore, personal or student's seriousness in the worship of God greatly depends on his/her self-understanding in relation to fellow students and to God.

### 5. Conclusion and Recommendation

This study has demonstrated that university life is challenging in most cases. When a person joins the university, that person meets with not only people of different behavior, but also the life which was never experienced before. Anything that an individual wants or likes to do in the university is to some extent available; and any kind of life one wishes to live is there. Unfortunately, most university students live a copying and pasting life. By that case, a University can be referred to as a place of changing people's behaviors, especially those with greater weaknesses of wills.

At the University, students' change in behavior happens either positively or negatively and is spontaneous as one student interacts with other students, or students interact with lecturers. As noted in this study, the students' change leads to possible backsliding in worshipping God, which is a serious and inevitable problem among most university students. It has been noted in this article that when students join universities, they meet with a lot of challenges such as age

challenges, bad peer pressures, lack of fear of God, the effects of globalization to youth, a controversy between students' backgrounds and the University life reality, psychological problems, absence of individual's trust in God, lack of seriousness in serving and acknowledging God, anxieties and lack of self-understanding which affect their freewill positively or negatively, which in turn affect their relationship with God, hence making them backslide or totally depart from God.

In order to mitigate the students' problem of backsliding from the worship of God at TEKU, and the Chaplaincies of other universities in Tanzania, Africa, and the world at large, there is a necessity of having psychological experts in the University campus to provide counsel to students as soon as they face psychological problems. Counselors will help students reduce anxieties and understand themselves and the purpose of their university studies. Students should seriously be advised to be very focused on what they are supposed to do at the University and not engage in non-beneficial and unnecessary matters. Students should make sure that they do not leave God because God is a refuge during troubles and temptations. Moreover, lecturers and pastors at TEKU should insist in students attending worship sessions whenever offered for their spiritual nourishment. Hence, it is life of commitment to God spiritually and physically that can make students survive the dangerous storms of University life.

## Funding

None

## Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this article because no funding agent was involved.

## Acknowledgments

This Article is the result of research conducted at Teofilo Kisanji University in Mbeya Tanzania. Authors are grateful for the contributions made by all informants, staff and students. Moreover, researchers appreciate the contributions of First Year Bachelor of Divinity degree students (2020/2021) for the various discussions of students' Papers held in class during the course of *Creative Writing*. Their contributions were invaluable.

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